PREVIEW

BRAUNSTON MARINA

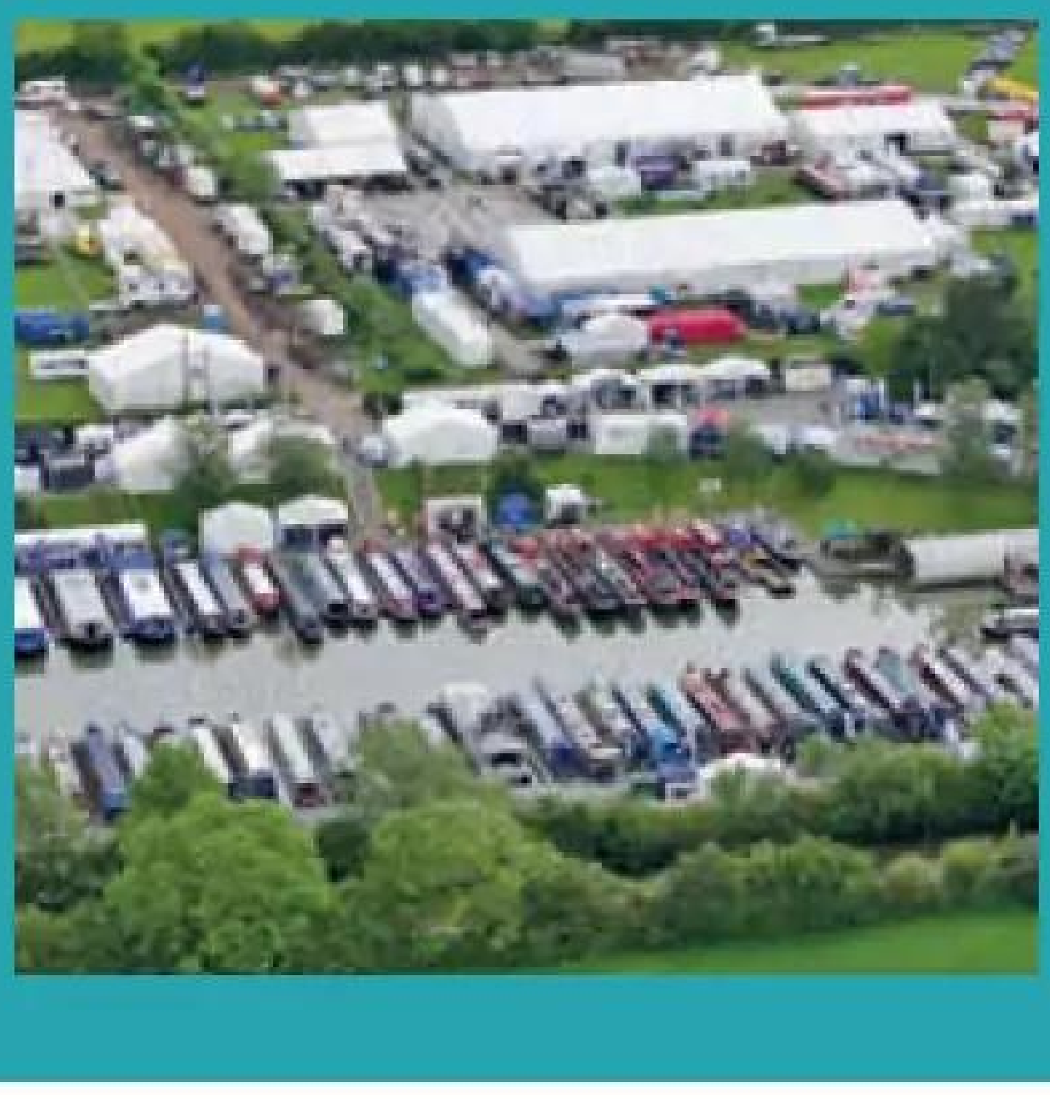
Historic Narrowboat Rally
28-29 June, 2025

REG AT DAVENTRY No
BLUE

CRICK SHOW

FIRST OF OUR REPORTS

Latest news from the Crick Boat Show



CanalBoat

For everyone who enjoys the waterways

JULY 2025 £4.99 ***canalboat.co.uk***

NIGHTHAWK
CALLING
6

NIGHTHAWK CALLING

BY KINGS BROMLEY WHARF NARROWBOATS

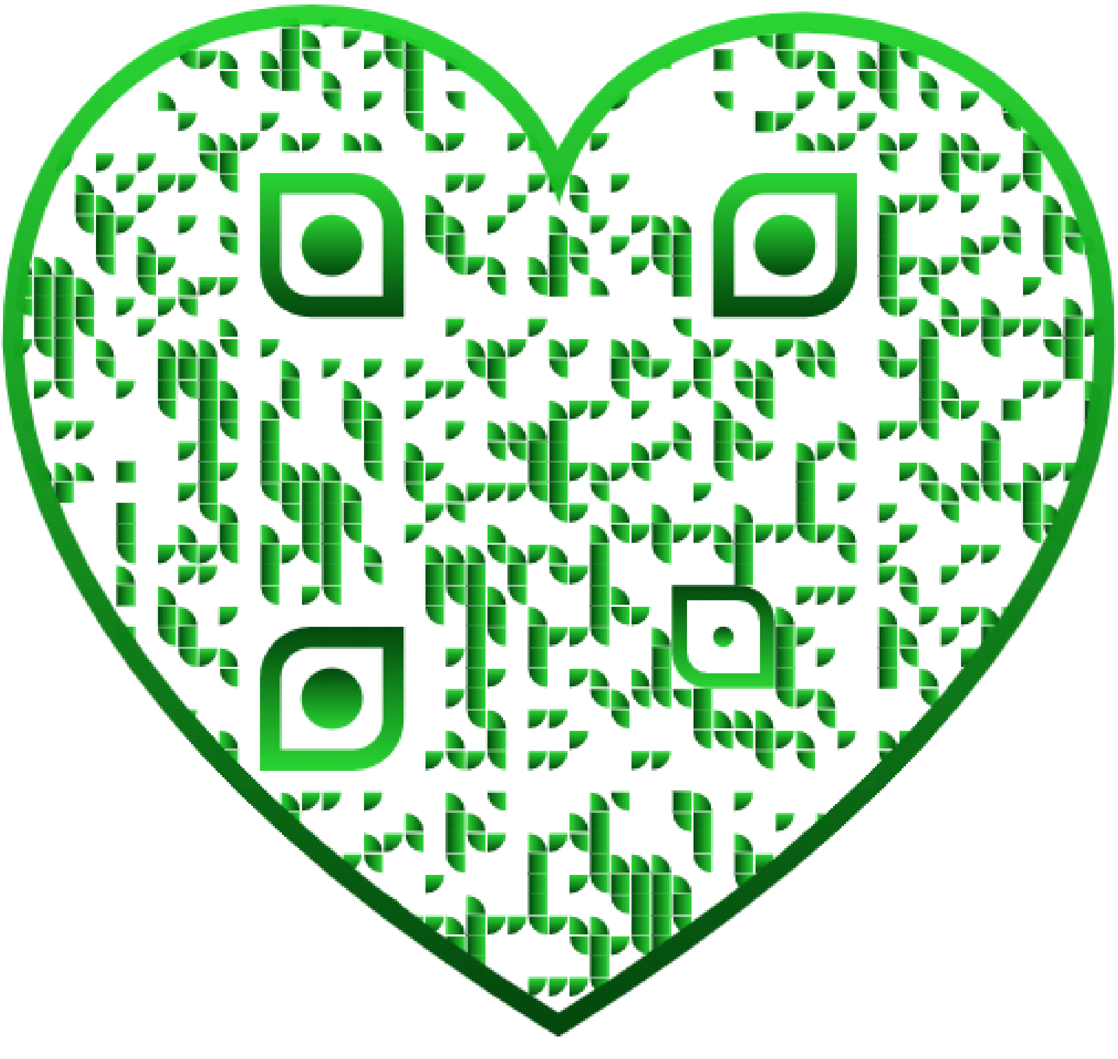
JULY 2025 £4.99
07
KELSEYmedia 9 771362 031209

PRIZES TO BE WON
CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF RIVER CANAL RESCUE

CANAL & RIVER TRUST APPOINTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CRUISE GUIDE
RIVERS LEE & STORT

ELECTRIC BOATS **STEAM DAY AT ANDERTON LIFT** **GALLEY GRUB**



Your needs . . .

BETA MARINE

Seagoing | Saildrives | Inland Waterways | Marine Generating Sets | Spares & Support

- 38 years of customer centred focus, listening to needs and delivering long term value solutions.
- Specialists in customer advice and support at all points of a products life.
- Superb after-sales service via our network of approved engine installers and spares stockists.

DIESEL

- 14 to 98 HP Greenline keel cooled diesel propulsion engines with mechanical or hydraulic gearboxes. Full hydraulic drive option available.
- Super silent acoustic housings, 3.5 or 5.0 kVA travel power and bow thruster options available.
- **REDUCE CO_2 BY UP TO 90%!** Compatible for continuous use with HVO fuel.*

HYBRID

- 43 to 98 HP Greenline keel cooled diesel propulsion engines with single or twin 48v hybrid electric drive motor/generator(s).

ELECTRIC

- E-Drive electric propulsion, 14kW & **NEW** 21kW constant electrical propulsion power.
- Fully integratable with 48v battery management inverter charger systems.
- Fully integratable with BetaGen/BetaSet generators.

- 5 year combustion engine & 3 year E-Drive self-service warranty, recreational use only terms & conditions apply.

*If other FAME bio fuels are used or mixed use of Diesel, HVO or FAME bio fuels may occur we strongly advise to make use of our alternative fuel kit option. Available for new or retro fit-able to existing engines.

. . . our tailored solutions

delivering reliability and peace of mind

www.betamarine.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1452 723492 Email: sales@betamarine.co.uk

CanalBoat

JULY 2025

WELCOME

The picture comes from our Boat Test feature (see page 22). A big news story opens this month as the Canal & River Trust has appointed Campbell Robb as its chief executive, we wish him well. The final Boat Test by Adam and Andy is next and this month they test Nighthawk Calling by Kings Bromley Wharf Narrowboats. We hope to have another tester very soon. Next, we have a piece on an Electric day boat and Electrika 2025. Martin follows with a look at the Crick Show – more on that in the August issue. The Cruise Guide is next and Martin looks at the rivers Lee and Stort, which he follows with the Cruise Guide Extra and this month he looks at two East London waterway connections. Our ongoing boat restoration feature is next and this time Claire is building a window. Bob Weir then reports from a trip he made to the Steam event at the Anderton Lift. The Braunston Historic Rally is next and Tim Coghlan gives us a preview of what we can expect at the event and our final feature gives an account of how the phone app – what3words – helped save the life of a canal rose painter. To make sure of your copy each month why not take out a subscription, go to pages 34-35 to get a great deal.

Enjoy the magazine.

Charlie

NIGHTHAWK CALLING
6

Meet the team

Charlie Waters
The editor, with more than 30 years' experience in the publishing industry

Martin Ludgate
Our Deputy Editor is the guru on all things to do with canals and the restoration of the waterways

JULY'S CONTRIBUTORS

Adam Porter

Andy Annable

Julie Clark

Melissa Blease

James Millsop

Tim Coghlan

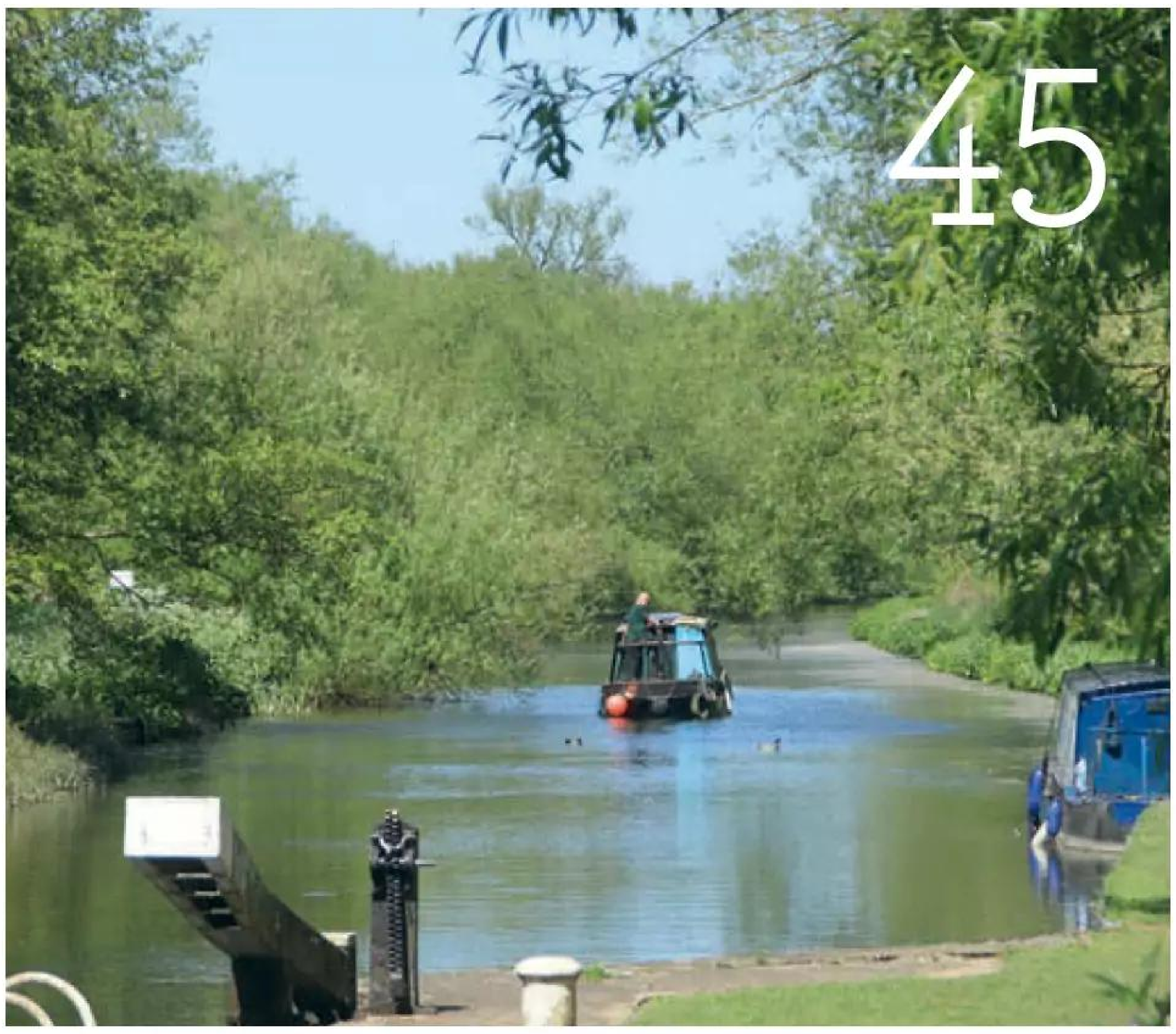
Claire Leavey

Bob Weir

SUBSCRIBE
SAVE UP TO 48%* ON THE FULL PRICE
DIRECTLY TO YOUR DOOR
NEVER MISS AN ISSUE
RECEIVE OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER
SEE PAGE 34 FOR DETAILS
PAY JUST £3.99 PER ISSUE

CanalBoat
BOAT TEST
TWITCHY FEET
BY SMITHWOOD NARROWBOATS
Plus LICHFIELD CANAL RESTORATION
CRUISE GUIDE
THE LANCASTER CANAL

CanalBoat
www.canalboat.co.uk
JULY 2025



GET IT ON Google play
Download on the App Store

GET IT ON GOOGLE play and
Download on the App Store

Subscribe to our digital edition of Canal Boat today on your device and enjoy instant access.

ON THE COVER ©

FEATURES

22 BOAT TEST ©
Nighthawk Calling by Kings Bromley Wharf Narrowboats

16 PRODUCT NEWS
The latest must haves for boaters

36 ELECTRIC
Electric day boat at Fenny Marina & Electrika 2025

39 CRICK BOAT SHOW
Martin reports from the event

45 CRUISE GUIDE
Rivers Lee & Stort

53 CRUISE GUIDE EXTRA
East London waterway connections

58 LIVEABOARD
Bones is at home with nature

67 BOAT RESTORATION
Window in and it opens!

73 STEAM AT THE LIFT
Fun in the sun at Anderton

77 BRAUNSTON HISTORIC NARROWBOAT RALLY
28– 29 June, 2025

81 WHAT3WORDS
The phone app helped save a canal rose painter's life

REGULARS

03 EDITORIAL
Charlie Waters gives us a brief taste of what's in this issue

06 NEWS
CRT appoints Campbell Robb as its new Chief Executive

19 **THE BIG PICTURE** Send in a waterways photo – and you could win a set of Nicholson Waterway Guides

34 **SUBSCRIPTIONS** Take out a subscription to Canal Boat and you will never miss an issue

61 **BOATERS BREAK** Rooftop gardening, and the tricky acrostic canal puzzle

65 **GALLEY GRUB** Lamb, Goats' Cheese and Minty Broad Bean Salad

66 **WATERSIDE WILDLIFE** Enchanter's nightshade, dragonflies and water-lilies

BACK CABIN

62 **ASK THE EXPERTS** Electric motors and batteries – what's right for you?

90 **SECONDHAND BOATS** 23ft to 57ft, £16,000 to £94,000

98 **LAST WORD** Let us pray for more boat sales

BRAUNSTON MARINA
FIRST OF OUR REPORTS
CanalBoat
For everyone who enjoys the waterways
NIGHTHAWK CALLING
PRIZES TO BE WON CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF RIVER CANAL RESCUE
CANAL & RIVER TRUST APPOINTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE
CRUISE GUIDE RIVERS LEE & STORT
ELECTRIC BOATS STEAM DAY AT ANDERTON LIFT GALLEY GRUB

THIS MONTH'S COVER PICTURE:
Is Nighthawk Calling by Andy Annable

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
and never miss an issue

Kelsey Media
The Granary, Downs Court
Yalding Hill, Yalding, Maidstone
Kent, ME18 6AL

EDITORIAL
Editor: Charlie Waters
Email: editor@canalboat.co.uk
Deputy Editor: Martin Ludgate
Email: martin.ludgate@kelsey.co.uk
Art Editor: Mark Hyde

ADVERTISEMENT SALES & PRODUCTION
Head of Investment
Catherine Crockart: Catherine@talk-media.uk
Tel: 01732 445678
Ad Production: Talk Media

MANAGEMENT
Chief Executive: Steve Kendall
Retail Director: Steve Brown
Print Production Manager: Kelly Orriss
Direct Consumer Revenue MD: Kevin McCormick

Subscriptions
12 issues of Canal Boat are published per annum
UK annual subscription price: £92.88
Europe annual subscription price: £116.88
USA annual subscription price: £116.88
Rest of World annual subscription price: £128.88

UK subscription and back issue orderline:
01959 543 747
Overseas subscription order line:
0044 (0) 1959 543 747
Toll free USA subscription order line:
1-888-777-0275
UK customer service team: 01959 543 747
For customer service support, please email:
cs@kelsey.co.uk

Customer service and subscription postal address: Canal Boat Customer Service Team
Kelsey Media, The Granary, Downs Court
Yalding Hill, Yalding,, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 6AL

Find current subscription offers on our website:
shop.kelsey.co.uk/canal

Already a subscriber?
Manage your subscription online:
shop.kelsey.co.uk/myaccount

DISTRIBUTION
Distribution in Great Britain
Seymour Distribution Limited
2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT
Tel. 020 7429 4000
www.seymour.co.uk

Distribution in Northern Ireland and the Republic Of Ireland
Newspread
Tel: +353 23 886 3850

Kelsey Media 2025 © all rights reserved. Kelsey Media is a trading name of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with permission in writing from the publishers. Note to contributors: articles submitted for consideration by the editor must be the original work of the author and not previously published. Where photographs are included, which are not the property of the contributor, permission to reproduce them must have been obtained from the owner of the copyright. The editor cannot guarantee a personal response to all letters and emails received. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Publisher. Kelsey Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for products and services offered by third parties.

Kelsey Media takes your personal data very seriously. For more information of our privacy policy, please visit Kelsey Media takes your personal data very seriously. For more information of our privacy policy, please visit https://www.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy/. If at any point you have any queries regarding Kelsey's data policy you can email our Data Protection Officer at dpo@kelsey.co.uk.

KELSEY media
www.kelsey.co.uk

Canal Boat NEWS

Your monthly roundup of all the latest news from the waterways of Great Britain and beyond. Tell us your news
editor@canalboat.co.uk

New CRT head chosen

The Canal & River Trust has announced the appointment of Campbell Robb as its new chief executive. 56-year-old Mr Robb, will be joining the charity on 6 October, after six years leading the social justice charity Nacro as its chief executive.

Before his various stints in senior roles at charities Mr Robb was press officer for Chris Smith MP; press and parliamentary officer for two organisations; and researcher for David Blunkett MP – parliamentary experience which may be useful in the light of the current concerns about Government funding for the waterways.

David Orr, chair at CRT, commented: “I am delighted that Campbell will be joining the Canal & River Trust as its new chief executive. He brings a wealth of experience from across the charity sector, including 15 years in similar roles where he has successfully strengthened organisations to respond to challenges and opportunities. I look forward to working with him to secure the longer-term future of our canals.”

Current Chief Executive Richard Parry, will leave at the end of July. Between then and Campbell Robb joining on 6 October, CRT’s longstanding Chief Investment Officer Stuart Mills will be the interim Chief Executive.

Campbell Robb

Pennine closure

Following the driest three-month period in over 90 years during the spring, coupled with reduced water stocks at the start of the year due to statutory reservoir improvement work in progress, the Canal & River Trust has taken the decision to close a length of the trans-Pennine Leeds & Liverpool Canal until further notice.

The Trust said that despite best efforts to reduce losses, coordinate lock operations to reduce wastage and consider restrictions to eke out remaining stocks, supplies were at critical levels. From 22 May all locks from Wigan to Gargrave were shut and the gates were ‘ashed up’ (sealed using ashes to reduce leakage). In addition, Bingley (5-rise and 3-rise), Kirkstall, Forge and Newlay staircase locks were closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with restricted opening hours on other days.

With low levels having already caused closures on the Rochdale (shut from Sowerby Bridge to Gauxholme) and Huddersfield broad and narrow canals (entire route east of Standedge Tunnel) that means all three trans-Pennine routes were shut as we went to press. Coupled with other closures – the major breach on the Bridgewater Canal (reopening in 2026), breach in the canal bed at Bosley on the Macclesfield (due to reopen on 20 June), problems with gates on the Anderton Lift (likely to remain shut through the summer) and eastern length of the Caldon from Hazelhurst to Froghall (closed until further notice to save water) – boating options in the north west are particularly restricted.

...and T&M shut too

The western part of Trent & Mersey Canal has also been hit by closure as a result of water shortages.

The 32 of the Cheshire Locks (‘Heartbreak Hill’) between the junction with the Middlewich Arm in Middlewich and Hardings Wood Junction with the Macclesfield Canal in Kidsgrove were closed until further notice on 19 May as a result of low water levels following continuing dry weather. This interrupts the popular Four Counties Ring, further restricts navigation in the northwest, and in combination with other closures means that the T&M north of Great Haywood is effectively a dead end.

...while Mon & Brec heads for the Senedd

The problems with the water supply to the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal have taken a political turn, with the matter due to be debated by the Welsh Government.

As reported in our May and June issues, the abstraction licence from Natural Resources Wales (necessary under new rule) for water which has been fed from the River Usk into the canal since it was built two centuries ago has been granted, but only with conditions attached which mean that in most summers the canal is likely to have to close to maintain the Usk’s flow.

A petition has now been set up on the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) website calling for the future of the water supply for the canal to be debated. As we went to press it had already reached over 13,500 signatures, and the Senedd petitions committee had agreed to put it forward for a debate amid concerns for the canal’s future.

AINTREE
BOATS

From hull only to fully fitted narrow & wide beam boats built to your own design

- 57ft cruiser hull only or fully fitted - contact office for prices
- 57x12ft cruiser hull only or fully fitted - contact office for prices
- Aintree Beetle range 25ft-40ft - contact office for prices

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD YOUR DREAM

www.aintreeboats.co.uk
0151 523 9000 | info@aintreeboats.co.uk | Units 14-16, Brookfield Trading Estate, Brookfield Drive, Aintree, Liverpool L9 7AS

BIGGEST TURNOUT YET FOR CAMPAIGN CRUISE

A record 26 narrowboats and other inland craft made their feelings felt and their horns heard outside the Houses of Parliament at the latest and largest of a series of campaign cruises organised by the Fund Britain's Waterways group of organisations – and there's a chance that this time their message might have reached King Charles III

Just some of the many boats that took the funding campaign to Parliament in May

ALADIN
THE NEECH FAMILY

From beginnings at Strawberry Island Boat Club in Doncaster, the flotilla headed south, picking up other boats on their 275-mile journey to London. There, they were joined by more – many of whom had attended the Inland Waterways Association's Canalway Cavalcade festival at Little Venice. Despite unexpected problems on the Regent's Canal including an electricity substation fire causing a spillage of chemicals which closed Maida Hill Tunnel and a boat hitting a lock gate putting City Road Lock temporarily out of action (and involving some boats diverting via West London and Brentford) they convened at Limehouse Basin for the 7 May journey up the tidal Thames to Westminster, where on the stroke of 11am they sounded their horns, to cheers from supporters and representatives of waterways organisations gathered on Westminster Bridge, and heard by MPs gathered on the terrace prior to Prime Minister's Questions.

By chance the King happened to pass by on the river on an unrelated engagement, sampling Thames Clippers' latest hybrid powered waterbus – and must have become aware of the commotion.

After overnighting in the West India Docks, the flotilla returned to Limehouse before heading northwards again, this time planning to divert east to the Anglian waterways and a crossing of the Wash, making the point that underfunding isn't just affecting the Canal & River Trust's waterways (which, as widely publicised already, face repeated reductions in public funding from 2027 to 2037 which threaten their future), but other routes too including the Environment Agency's Anglian rivers. The initial flotilla aims to return to Doncaster after 20 weeks away.

CRT DIPS INTO RESERVES FOR FACILITIES

Elsan points, pump out facilities and water points managed by the Canal & River Trust are set to get a boost over the next five years with an additional investment of £4.5 million to upgrade boaters' facilities across the canal network

Over the coming months the Trust will be developing plans for where the additional investment will be used, ahead of the five-year upgrade programme beginning this winter. The investment in the Trust's boaters' facilities is in addition to the annual cost of maintaining and looking after them. The money needed to upgrade the facilities will come from the sale of investment assets owned by the Trust. The Trust's investment assets are a vital pillar in generating a sustainable annual income each year for waterways maintenance. This sale is exceptional and has been agreed as the charity expects that providing more resilient services for boaters will deliver cost savings which offset any income lost from the sale of the investments in the longer-term.

Matthew Symonds, head of boating at CRT, said: "Boater facilities are vital for those living on and cruising around our network. Those owned by the Trust have been operated and managed locally, which has resulted in a wide range of components and arrangements which can be expensive and complex to repair when things go wrong. With this £4.5 million investment, we are spending now to be more efficient in the long term. By upgrading and standardising the facilities, we expect to see some cost savings for our charity in the longer term, while aiming for boaters to receive a more consistent service."

ONLY 2 PLOTS REMAINING

Luxury
Waterside
Lodges

Located within the prestigous Mercia Marina which offers shops, restaurants, boat services and chandlery, all set in the beautiful Derbyshire countryside.

- **100 year licence**
- **10 year warranty**
- **Built to your design**
- **Ideal holiday let or second home**

New lodges from ***£235,400***

Used lodges available

Mercia Marina
Findern Lane
Willington Derbyshire
DE65 6DW

01283 703332

MERCIA MARINA
VILLAGE & PARK

For more information please call and ask for Tony Preston
www.merciamarina.co.uk info@merciamarina.co.uk

SWINGBRIDGE REPAIRED

The Canal & River Trust has completed a five-month programme of works to refurbish Royal Oak Swing Bridge, which carries Woodhouse End Road over the Macclesfield Canal in Oakgrove

With the repairs requiring a road closure, the bridge reopened on 25 April, following the work.

The increase in vehicle weights over the years had taken its toll on the bridge, which is one of 13 originally built across the canal, mostly for farmers to access their fields, and is the only one to carry a public highway. Over the years the original bridge has been demolished and reconstructed.

The repairs included an upgrade of the electrical instrumentation, software and hydraulics, which control and drive the bridge to open and close, as well as the bridge bearing and support structure.

The Trust removed, refurbished and re-installed the bridge, using a 300-tonne crane, before reopening the bridge to traffic.

Project Manager, Lisa Shaw, from Canal & River Trust explained: “We’ve been able to successfully carry out a complete upgrade and repairs to fully refurbish the bridge and futureproof it for many years to come. “We are grateful to the local people, boaters, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians for their patience during the disruption while the works were taking place, which took longer than originally planned. However, our extensive work to upgrade the structure has given us the chance to reopen a stronger, safer and more resilient bridge.”

Bridge view from pedestrian walkway

MARINA GETS GREENER

Aqueduct Marina has taken another step towards decarbonising their operation with the installation of 73kw of solar panels on the workshops and facilities building

The installation, carried out by TB Electrics, saw 170 highly efficient 440w solar panels fitted to the main building, which houses the administrative offices, reception and the cafe. A project partly funded by Cheshire East Council.

The installation complemented the existing ground source heat pump and solar tubes on the facilities building that already provide heating and some of the hot water. It is hoped that the combined output of these new panels will reduce Aqueduct’s consumption of electricity from the grid by 20%.

The new solar panels help the marina to reduce its carbon emissions even further, something Aqueduct’s MD, Robert Parton, is keen to do after calculating the business›s carbon footprint a few years ago. To enable the marina to reduce its emissions of CO2, the company now uses HVO fuel in all of its vehicles, as well as offering it to boat owners for use in their boats. Hydrogen fuel can also be purchased from the chandlery, and even casual visitors to the marina can make use of the EV chargers in the carpark.

Meanwhile, plans are underway for the marina’s own boat show, which will be held at the marina on 19 July between 10am and 4pm.

The event, sponsored for the second year in a row by Haven Knox-Johnston, has already attracted a large number of trade exhibitors, including Amtrim Covers, Barrus, Caldwells Windows, Gangplanks Spirits, Haven Knox-Johnston, Knights Narrowboats, Lockgate Stoves, LKQ Leisure & Marine, who have also confirmed and will be bringing their Mastervolt van. Tim’s Fishing Tackle and Ovation Boats will also be at the event, as will Tony O’Neills – Artist and Water Freedom. And from the local area, Bidlea Dairy as well as JDL Mini Markets who will have 20 local businesses bringing stalls with them on day including a street food vendor.

For more details, visit the Aqueduct Marina website at www.aqueductmarina.co.uk

Aqueduct’s MD, Robert Parton, inspects the new solar panels installed on the roof of the main building

36687

Machine Mart®

BRITAIN'S TOOLS & MACHINERY SPECIALIST

INVERTER GENERATORS

RELIABLE SOURCE OF POWER FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF APPLICATIONS

THE PERFECT GENERATORS FOR BOATING

SINE WAVE TECHNOLOGY.

Controlled electrical output ensures the delivery of clean and stable power – vital when running sensitive electrical equipment such as TVs, computers & tablets.

NEW

Clarke POWER
INVERTER GENERATOR
2200W

EURO 5 COMPLIANT

IG2300
010612302

£389.00 exc.VAT | £466.80 inc.VAT

Clarke POWER
INVERTER GENERATOR
1050W

EURO 5 COMPLIANT

IG1100
010611103

£279.00 exc.VAT | £334.80 inc.VAT

Clarke POWER
INVERTER GENERATOR

EURO 5 COMPLIANT

IG1900
010617117

£329.00 exc.VAT | £394.80 inc.VAT

HONDA
HONDA
EU22i

3.6L
2.2kW

SAVE OVER £331 inc.VAT

HONDA EU22I 2.2KW
010611096
- see online for full spec

£912.50 exc.VAT | £1095.00 inc.VAT

PRICE CUT WAS £1426.80 inc.VAT

Clarke POWER
INVERTER GENERATOR

★★★★★
Excellent generator... Another brilliant purchase from machine mart
www.machinemart.co.uk

IG1700F
010617095

£249.00 exc.VAT | £298.80 inc.VAT

110 & 230V
MODELS AVAILABLE

4 STROKE ENGINES
Not to be confused with noisier oil burning 2 stroke units

QUIET RUNNING
ON ALL THE MODELS FEATURED IN THIS ADVERT

FOR THE FULL RANGE OF INVERTER GENERATORS SEE:
machinemart.co.uk

Clarke
MOTOR OIL SAE 30
1 Litre

MOTOR OIL - 1 LITRE
051130101
£7.99 exc.VAT
£9.59 inc.VAT

£19.98 exc.VAT
£23.98 inc.VAT

5 LITRE FUEL CAN
070519970

SPOUT FOR FUEL CANS
070520107
£8.99 exc.VAT
£10.79 inc.VAT

Model	Max Output	Running time at ¾ load	Dims. mm	Weight	Outputs	Fuel tank capacity	Order Code:	exc.VAT	WAS inc.VAT	NOW inc.VAT
IG1700F	1700W	8 Hrs	390x450x440	22kg	2x 230V, 13A output sockets	0.9L	010617095	£249.00		£298.80
IG1100	1050W	2 Hrs 50 Mins	425x250x405	13.4kg	1x 230V, 13A Socket, 1x 12V Socket, 2 x USB	12L	010611103	£279.00		£334.80
IG1900	2000W	5 Hrs	500x307x465	20.0kg	2x 230V, 13A Socket, 1x 12V Connector Socket	5.6L	010617117	£329.00		£394.80
IG2300	2200W	6 Hrs 15 Mins	500x307x465	21.0kg	2x 230V 13A, 1x 12V Connector, 2 x USB, 12V DC*	5.6L	010612302	£389.00		£466.80
IG4000	3800W	4 Hrs 25 Mins	488x285x463	52.8kg	1x 12V DC (5a)2x 230V, 13A sockets	4.5L	010617130	£895.00	£1078.80	£1074.00
IG8000	7500W	8 Hrs 15 Mins	755x770x610	114kg	1 x 230V 32A, 2x 230V 13A, 1x 12V cigarette, 1 x 5V USB	26L	010617135	£1699.00	£2230.80	£2038.80

*connecting lead with crocodile clips

SAVE £££S ON THIS WEEEK'S
£ **PRICE CRASH**
SEE ONLINE FOR LATEST DETAILS

EASY TO USE WEBSITE
NOW OVER **21,000** PRODUCTS ONLINE!
www.machinemart.co.uk

FRIENDLY STORES NATIONWIDE
OPEN 7 DAYS - TRADE & PUBLIC

FIND YOUR LOCAL STORE ONLINE

EASY WAYS TO BUY...

CALL & COLLECT AT STORES TODAY
CLICK & COLLECT OVER 10,500 LOCATIONS
CALL: 0115 956 5555

Calls to the catalogue request number cost 7p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Calls may be monitored. All prices correct at time of going to press. We reserve the right to change products and prices. All products subject to availability. E&OE.

FOXTON RECALLS 'PIVOTAL' IWA EVENT

Exactly 75 years ago, the 1950 Festival of Boats and Arts, held at Market Harborough by the Inland Waterways Association just four years after it had been founded, played a pivotal role in the campaign to prevent the loss of the nation's formerly industrial waterways and the beginning of their renaissance. And to mark the anniversary, a festival is being held at nearby Foxton on 7 and 8 June, organised by IWA's Leicestershire branch.

The free event will see many boats, including historic working boats and floating traders, moored at the top and bottom of the flight of locks at Foxton, the longest steepest staircase flight of locks in the country.

Visitors will be able to buy a variety of crafts and other items from trading stalls in the event field, where there will also be a range of activities, exhibitions, demonstrations, live music, food stalls and refreshments.

On the Saturday a cavalcade of colourful boats will make their way down the flight of ten locks and cruise to Union Wharf in Market Harborough, the location of the 1950 Festival of Boats & Arts. The event is also being supported by Foxton Canal Museum, Old Union Canals Society and GL Events.

Andrew Shephard, chairman of the Leicestershire branch of the IWA, said: "The 1950 Festival of Boats & Arts was a pivotal event and helped to trigger the transformation of the nation's formerly industrial waterways into the valuable leisure resource that is enjoyed by so many today. The need to keep our historic canals alive remains as important today as it ever was and we want to encourage local people and boaters to join us for this fantastic celebration of our wonderful waterways."

Linny Beaumont, East Midlands director for Canal & River Trust, said: "We're really looking forward to this event which should be a real spectacle and lots of fun. At a time when our historic waterways are again under threat, from spiralling costs and the impacts of climate change, it's important that we all take the time to celebrate how special they are – and what better way than spending time with the family at fantastic Foxton Locks."

1950 Festival of Boats and Arts

BETTER ACCESS TO MON & BREC

Locals will have better access to the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal at Gilwern, thanks to pathway improvements and an upgraded wheelchair-friendly picnic area

Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales, was able to make the upgrades thanks to Monmouthshire County Council's access improvement scheme funded by the UK Government's shared prosperity fund.

The works are part of the community-led celebrations for this year's 225th anniversary of the canal with construction of the waterway starting near Gilwern in 1796.

David Morgan, development manager for Wales at Glandŵr Cymru, said: "As a charity, we want to make sure that everyone can enjoy our canals, and the improvements to the pathways and picnic site at Gilwern will enable all canal lovers to reap the benefits of spending time by water.

"We're grateful to Monmouthshire County Council for their support of this project, and of our Brecon 225 anniversary celebrations, which will see us mark this special anniversary for the northern section of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal throughout the year with a series of community events."

The improvements at Gilwern follow the recent move to secure an emergency supply of water this summer to keep the 35-mile long Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal topped up for boats and for the benefit of local people and wildlife. This is after restrictions to the canal's historic water supply from the River Usk came into force at the end of last year, exacerbated by the unseasonably dry start to 2025. (see page 6).

The Brecon 225 celebrations mark the anniversary of the completion of the northern Brecon Canal, when the first cargo of coal reached Brecon Basin on Christmas Eve 1800.

Gilwern picnic area

DIGGING THE DIRT ON THE ASHBY

The Canal & River Trust carried out dredging on the Ashby Canal as part of vital works to help ensure boaters can continue to use the waterway

The dredging, saw the charity remove around 7,000 tons of sediment at various locations on the canal between Sutton Cheney and Market Bosworth, a distance of almost four miles.

The work was carried out using a special floating digger which hauled out silt which has accumulated on the bottom of the canal and loaded it into a hopper barge to be taken away.

The Trust is also shoring-up a 150-metre section of the canal's bank near Shenton. As part of the work, silt dredged from the canal will be used as 'backfill'. The remainder of the nutrient-rich dredged material will be unloaded and spread on to a canal-side farmer's field near Far Coton.

Dredging is an important part of the CRT's ongoing work to keep the canal open and boats moving. Nationwide the charity spends around £7million per year removing tens of thousands of tonnes of sediment from the bottom of its canals.

Paul Fox, senior project manager at CRT, said: "Dredging is just one part of the vital ongoing programme of maintenance we carry out to make sure that our historic canals are navigable for boaters and so that they are available to benefit wildlife and for local people to use and enjoy."

Dredger on the Ashby Canal

1936 BOLTON BREACH REPAIRED

A derelict section of the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal, disused since a 1936 breach, is being reinstated as part of the multi-phase regeneration of the Creams Mill site in Little Lever, Bolton, with developer, Watson and Onward Homes, advancing a technically complex scheme that blends affordable housing delivery with substantial infrastructure upgrades

The scheme recently welcomed a delegation of senior leaders from Bolton Council, including Cllr Nick Peel, Leader of the Council, along with senior officers from the regeneration, housing and economic development teams. The group visited the site to observe the construction progress and the ongoing canal reinstatement works.

The canal restoration, a centrepiece of the development, has now progressed to include drainage and ducting infrastructure, road construction over the reinstated canal section, and the initial formation of a new towpath, reconnecting pedestrian routes and celebrating the site's industrial heritage.

Rob Watson, Director of Watson Homes, added: "This is a technically ambitious and socially important project for us. Restoring the canal is as much about connecting places as it is about celebrating heritage, making it a significant part of the project, alongside new homes, upgraded infrastructure and local job opportunities. We're grateful for the continued support from Bolton Council and our partners at Onward as we look forward to continuing our work on Creams Mill and other projects across the borough."

Sandy Livingstone, Executive Director of Property at Onward Homes, said: "Creams Mill is a flagship project for Onward. As long term investors in Bolton, this is a demonstration of what strong local partnerships can achieve. Alongside high-quality affordable housing, designed to remain cost-effective for residents to live in, the project delivers vital regeneration, canal infrastructure and long-term environmental improvements. Working in partnership with Watson once again, we'll ultimately deliver more than 150 affordable homes at Creams Mill, bring a disused section of the canal network back into public use and open up wider regeneration opportunities in the local area."

TOW PATH TELEGRAPH

PROTECT AGAINST FUEL THEFT

▶ River Canal Rescue is advising boat owners to put a lock on their fuel caps after witnessing numerous cases of stolen fuel. Managing director, Stephanie Horton, warns: "Fuel siphoning from tanks is sadly becoming a common issue, and it's nationwide. We can't tell if the thieves are getting to boats via the towpath or on the water, but to deter them, put a separate lock on your fuel cap."

Perished fuel cap seals are another problem, as they allow water to enter the fuel tank and cause diesel bug.

Stephanie reminds: "People need to check and if necessary, change the seal on their fuel cap. A continuous cruiser, for example, may fill up every few weeks, so within a year, the seal will distort and begin to perish. It's a simple thing to do, yet many people don't even know they have a seal."

CRT URGES LOCALS TO REPORT WILDLIFE CRIME

▶ The Canal & River Trust is calling on people who regularly visit the Walsall Canal to report any suspected wildlife crime they see after several geese were found dead along the canal's towpat

CRT is working with the Natural England-led Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme and West Midlands Police to confirm the cause of death of these geese; however preliminary investigations have identified a suspected poison scattered along the towpath and in the canal.

If anyone has any information on this incident, please call the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme on 0800 321 600 quoting reference 107/963.

CRT SURVEY BEGINS ON THE LEEDS AND LIVERPOOL

The Canal & River Trust has begun a heritage survey of the nation's canal network, starting in the North West with the 127-mile-long Leeds & Liverpool Canal

The project will chart how the charity's canals, and the wider canal corridor, have changed over the past 30 years by updating and augmenting a joint British Waterways and Historic England survey of canals completed back in the early 1990s.

Undertaking the volunteer-led survey of the Trust's 2,000-mile network of canals and the historic setting around them is expected to take four years. It is being made possible thanks to funds raised by players of Peoples Postcode Lottery.

The new survey will record buildings associated with the canal, locks and lock cottages, bridges, aqueducts, tunnels, wharfs, warehouses, and stables. It will also include details such as mileposts, horse ramps and cobbles that make up the rich fabric of the Britain's unique and much-loved canal network. Later features such as the World War II pill boxes built along the canal, between Wigan and Liverpool in 1940, will also be recorded. The latest study will also include around 200 miles of canal restored since the first survey was conducted.

As well as physically surveying and photographing what's present along the ageing canal network, the team will also utilise historical maps, photos and archive text to chart as much as possible about what has been lost or changed since the canal network's use as a freight network hundreds of years ago and since the last survey over 30 years ago.

Bill Froggatt, heritage adviser at CRT, explained: "Thirty years after the first survey was completed, our charity has secured the funding to be able to go out and update and add to those original records. Using the support of our wonderful volunteers and embracing modern mobile technology, it will be a project that celebrates this wonderful legacy from our industrial past and helps preserve it for the future."

Heritage Survey volunteers group shot

AND FINALLY...

The former BBC Radio 2 news reader and Boat Tester for this magazine, Adam Porter, has launched a new canal-based podcast, The Water Road, after starting a new life afloat.

Adam left the BBC in March after 24 years, during which time he was best known for reading the news on Radio 2, 6Music, and 5 Live. He also appeared on the Zoe Ball Breakfast Show, and the late Steve Wright always called him Captain on air, because of his canal boat.

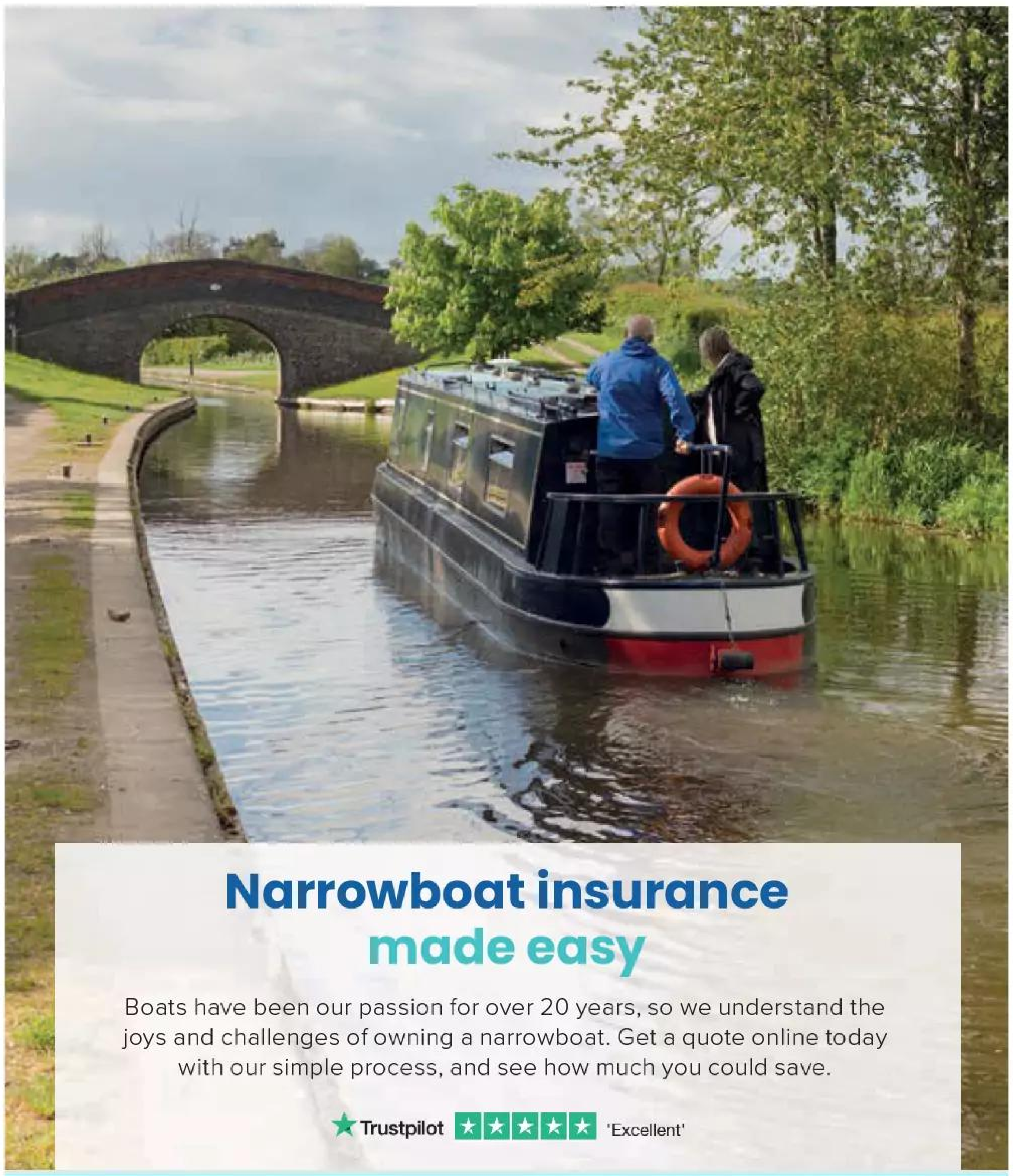
He and his husband, Adrian, have moved out of their house and onto their narrowboat. They intend to travel as much of the network as possible.

Adam said a podcast was the ideal way to share his love of the canals and rivers of England and Wales.

"There are dozens of canal YouTubers but I've always been a radio man, so audio was always going to be my thing. There are so many sounds that exemplify the waterways, from the clicking of winding lock paddles to boat engines and birdsong".

Two episodes of The Water Road have been published in April, and there will be two more in May, as they're being released fortnightly.

Each episode will highlight features of the waterways, canalside attractions along with interviews with people involved.The Water Road is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, and many of the smaller podcast platforms.



Narrowboat insurance made easy

Boats have been our passion for over 20 years, so we understand the joys and challenges of owning a narrowboat. Get a quote online today with our simple process, and see how much you could save.

★ Trustpilot ★★★★★ 'Excellent'

SCAN ME

Get an online quote today, visit:
craftinsure.com/CANAL25
call 0800 988 8164

ripe | craftinsure

15131

© Copyright Craftinsure Limited 2025. Craftinsure Limited is Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, Firm Reference Number 309693. Registered in England and Wales Number 04386107. Registered office: The Royals, Altrincham Road, Manchester M22 4BJ. Policies available to UK residents only. Trustpilot rating correct as of 16.04.2025

TEWKESBURY MARINA

BRITISH MARINE

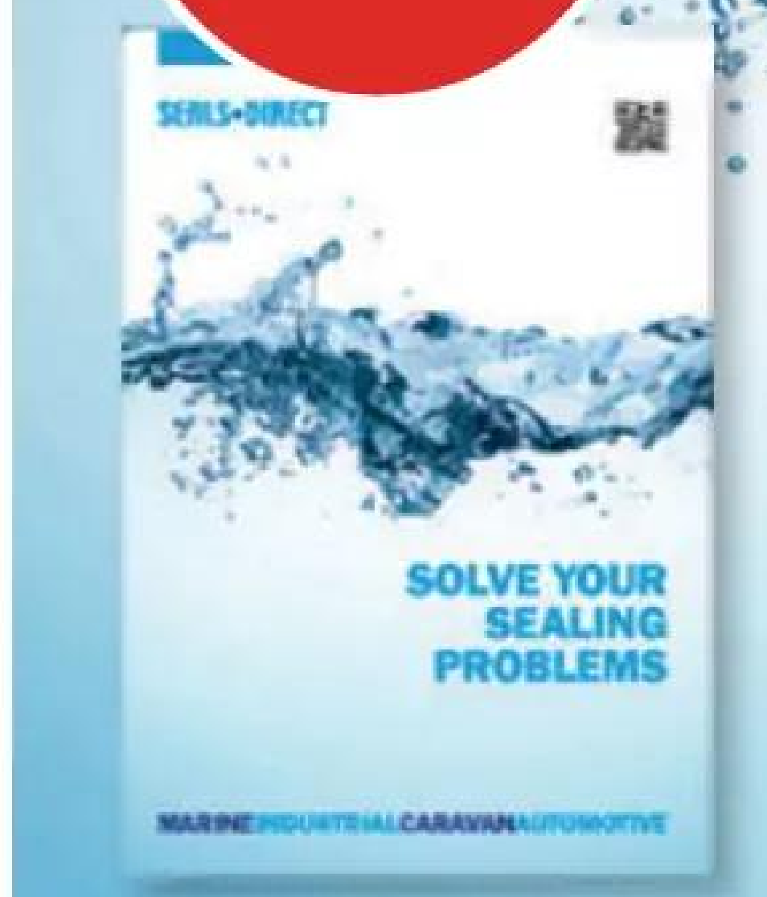
BETWEEN THE SEVERN & AVON IN BEAUTIFUL GLOUCESTERSHIRE

MOORINGS AND BOAT SALES

- Flood protected moorings for narrowboats, widebeams and cruisers
- Official residential moorings – On site fuel, pump-out, Chandlery and free Wifi
- Marina crew on hand 7 days a week
- A handy location in the centre of beautiful Tewkesbury • Brokerage service

www.tewkesbury-marina.co.uk

01684 293737 | sales@tewkesbury-marina.co.uk



SEALS+DIRECT

NEW CATALOGUE

Rubber seals and trims for the marine industry

FREE, fully illustrated catalogue
Please visit our website or call

01425 617722

Seals+Direct Ltd, Unit 6, Milton Business Centre
Wick Drive, New Milton, Hampshire BH25 6RH
Email: sales@sealsplusdirect.co.uk

MARINE INDUSTRIAL CARAVAN AUTOMOTIVE

www.sealsdirect.co.uk

Napton Narrowboats

For the best choice in British Boating

from our South Oxford or Shropshire Union bases

King Size double beds on most boats for the best night's sleep you'll get on a narrowboat. Unique rear deck dining on our 1st Class Regency Fleet boats.

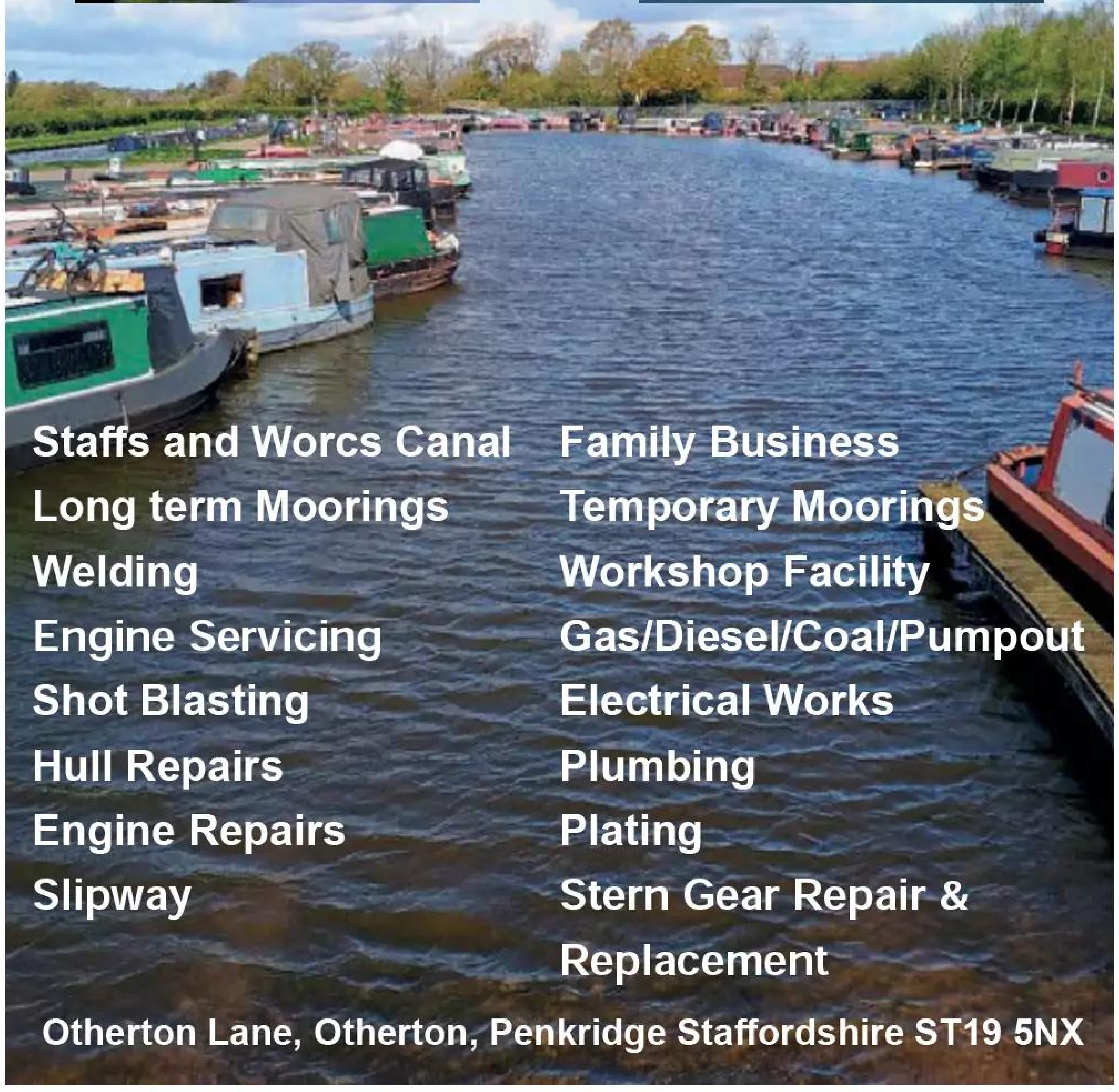
From our beautiful cosy 2 berth to our unique 6 berth with three king size doubles with en-suite, we offer a unique choice. Up to 40% off a week for a 2 week booking.

From 2-10 berth boats for weekly hire or short breaks

Call 01926 813644 for our brochure or visit
www.NaptonNarrowboats.co.uk

Otherton Boat Haven

Contact: 07581 459309
Email: info@othertonboathaven.co.uk



Staffs and Worcs Canal
Long term Moorings
Welding
Engine Servicing
Shot Blasting
Hull Repairs
Engine Repairs
Slipway

Family Business
Temporary Moorings
Workshop Facility
Gas/Diesel/Coal/Pumpout
Electrical Works
Plumbing
Plating
Stern Gear Repair & Replacement

Otherton Lane, Otherton, Penkridge Staffordshire ST19 5NX

BITS & BOBS

Your monthly round-up of canal related goods

5
LITRE
TWO BARE FEET
BOARDING CO. SINCE 1994
15
LITRE
TWO BARE FEET
BOARDING CO. SINCE 1994
B
T
F

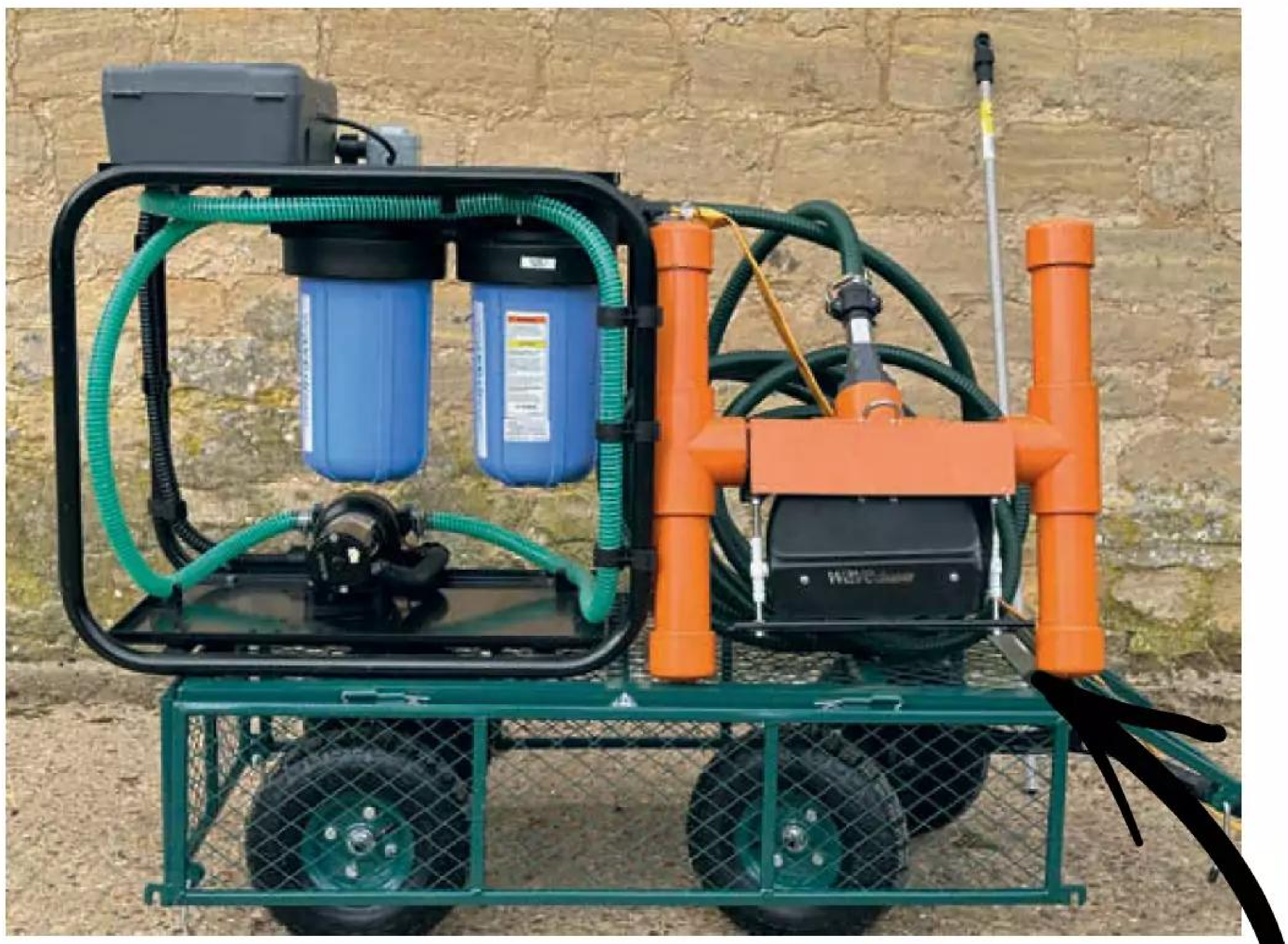
TWO BARE FEET WATERPROOF DRY BAG/CARRY BAG

Available in 5L, 10L, 15L & 20L sizes and various colours, these bags are suitable for kit and equipment for watersports and outdoor adventures! Heading out on the water, hitting the towpath, or braving a downpour, these watertight dry bags have your back.Made from tough waterproof PVC fabric, designed to protect your clothing and equipment in any wet environment. The roll-top closure with secure clip fastenings ensures a tight seal every time, while the adjustable strap gives you the freedom to carry it over your shoulder or in hand. Stash smaller items in the front zip pocket for quick access on the go.

Please note: These bags are splashproof and highly water-resistant, but not designed for full submersion.

Prices from £9.99 to £16.99

www.twobarefeet.co.uk



WAVE INTERNATIONAL – WAVECLEANER VAC

This is Wave International's upgraded Wavecleaner VAC, a system designed to quickly and easily deal with small scale pollution on water, originating from accidental spilling of oil, diesel or other pollutants into the watercourse. The system is designed to be a fast response solution to any accidental spills which can occur at locations such as marinas, fuel jetties and barges as well as waterside businesses such as boatyards. The Wavecleaner VAC is fully portable and mounted within a sturdy cage, and operates using a 12vDC rechargeable, hi-capacity battery pack.

When a fuel, oil or any other form of pollutant spill occurs, the user can simply move the Wavecleaner VAC to the location and start cleaning up immediately. Wavecleaner VAC is available for pre-order through Wave International. More information at www.waveinternational.co.uk

BOATHOUSES OF BRITAIN

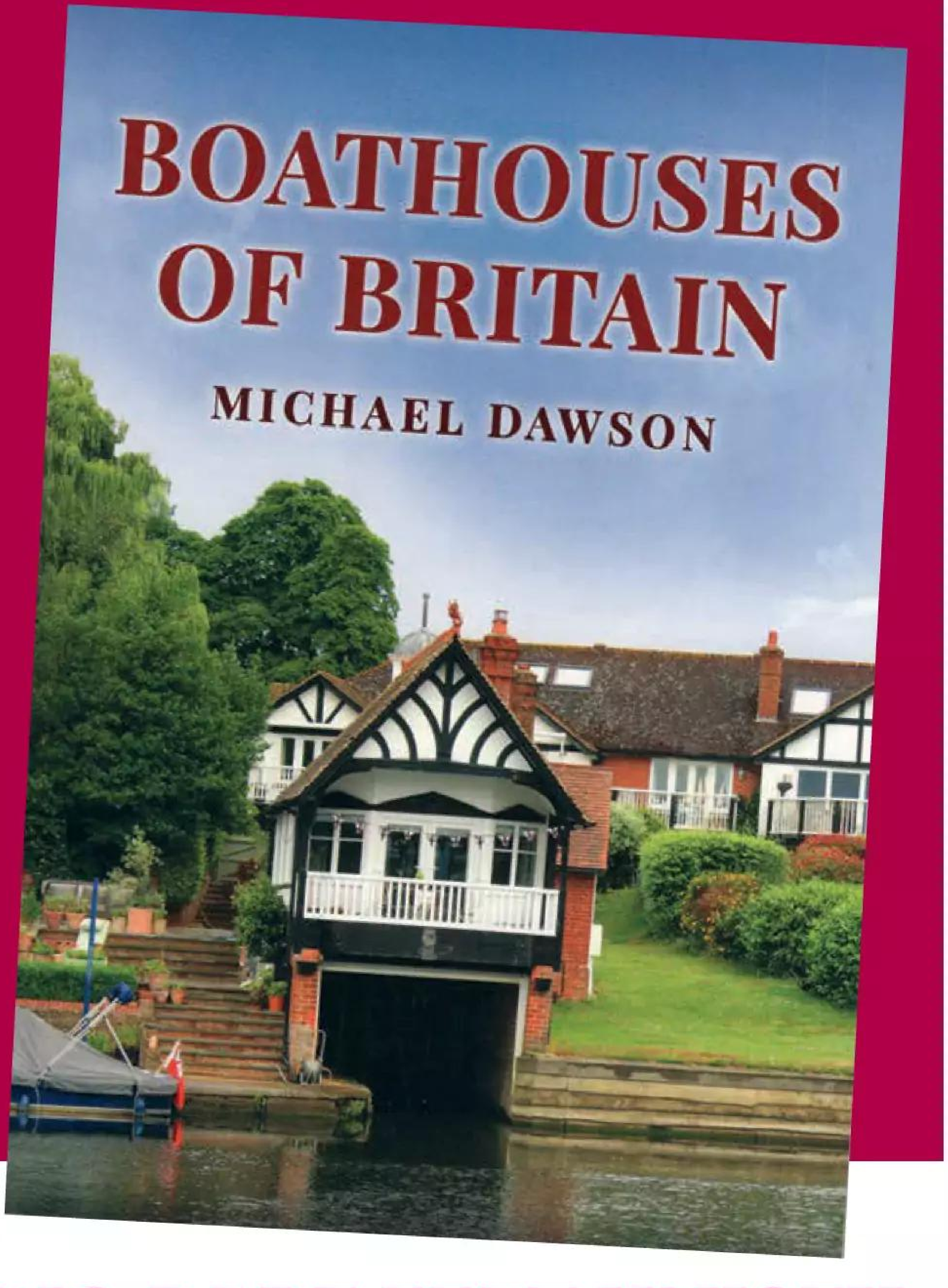
By Michael Dawson

The author Michael Dawson, looks at the history of boathouses from the earliest example in Roman Britain to the latest twenty-first century designs. Boathouses have a fascinating story to tell, one of taste and fashion, competition and industry. They were built on canals, parkland, reservoirs, riverbanks and along the coast providing protection for packet boats, royal barges, ferries and private steamers. One has even been described as 'magical,' the Victorian boat house on the Thames near Marlow, which was the setting for The Wind in the Willows.

With some superb images and informative text, this book is an indispensable guide to the history of the boathouses of Britain.

ISBN: 978-1-3981-2181-2

Available from www.amberley-books.com £15.99



twobarefeet

TWO BARE FEET UNISEX FLEECE JACKETS

Whether you're heading out for a brisk morning walk or cycle along the towpath, these fleeces are built to keep you warm and comfortable. Made from premium soft 300gsm fleece, they offer excellent insulation without the bulk.

Available in Khaki and Marine Blue and three styles, Unisex Gilet Full Zip Fleece, Unisex Full Zip Fleece and Unisex Quarter Zip Fleece. Designed to fit seamlessly into your everyday wardrobe striking the perfect balance between rugged functionality and refined style. With zipped outer pockets to keep your hands warm and your essentials secure, plus an adjustable waist ensures a tailored fit for maximum comfort and mobility. Various sizes available.

£24.99

www.twobarefeet.co.uk

BEAUTIFUL BOATS BUILT TO LAST

Established in 1974, Colecraft have gained the experience and expertise to ensure that the boat we build for you will last for years to come. All our boats are custom designed and built to individual requirements.

Boats are built to order to any stage of completion – from a bare hull or superstructure to luxuriously fitted and finished.

We build narrowbeam and widebeam boats for private and trade customers and are possibly the largest supplier of steel shells to other boat builders/fitters.

OUR LATEST TRIP BOATS INCLUDE

COMMUNITY SPIRIT – *Hybrid Propulsion – MCA Cert*
ELECTRA – *Narrowbeam – Electric Propulsion*
KINGFISHER MARK – *Widebeam – Electric Propulsion*
PEARL – *Widebeam – Hybrid Propulsion*

COLECRAFT 50

☎ 01926 814 081 ✉ sales@colecraft.co.uk
www.colecraftboats.co.uk
www.facebook.com/colecraftboats

BC BOAT MANAGEMENT LTD

ARE YOU A REGULAR HIRER?

Shared Ownership with BCBM could really work well for you. It makes such good financial sense because you own a percentage of your boat, and that means you only contribute that same percentage towards the running costs. BCBM have shares from £1,500 in a wide variety of boats, giving you up to 4 weeks holiday a year, every year.

CONTACT US FOR DETAILS ON OUR LATEST NEW BOAT

Nantwich Marina, Basin End,Chester Road
Nantwich, CW5 8LB
01270 811 500
www.bcbm.co.uk

Funkymonkeyboatnames.co.uk

- Design, preview & order online
- Boat names & paint stencils
- Scrolls, roses, flourishes, etc.
- Striping tape
- Reg. numbers
- Safety stickers

01590 671974

www.funkymonkeyboatnames.co.uk

BRAIDBAR

Award Winning Narrowboat Builder

Designed with you, built for you

Lord Vernon's Wharf, Lyme Road, Poynton,
Cheshire, SK12 1TH

www.braidbarboats.co.uk
01625 873471

WESTFIELD
SUB AQUA & MARINE INSURANCE SERVICES LTD

Specialist Narrow Boat Insurance

- BOAT & CONTENTS
- THIRD PARTY LIABILITY
- ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE
- FIRE & THEFT
- LOW EXCESSES

ESTABLISHED SINCE 1948

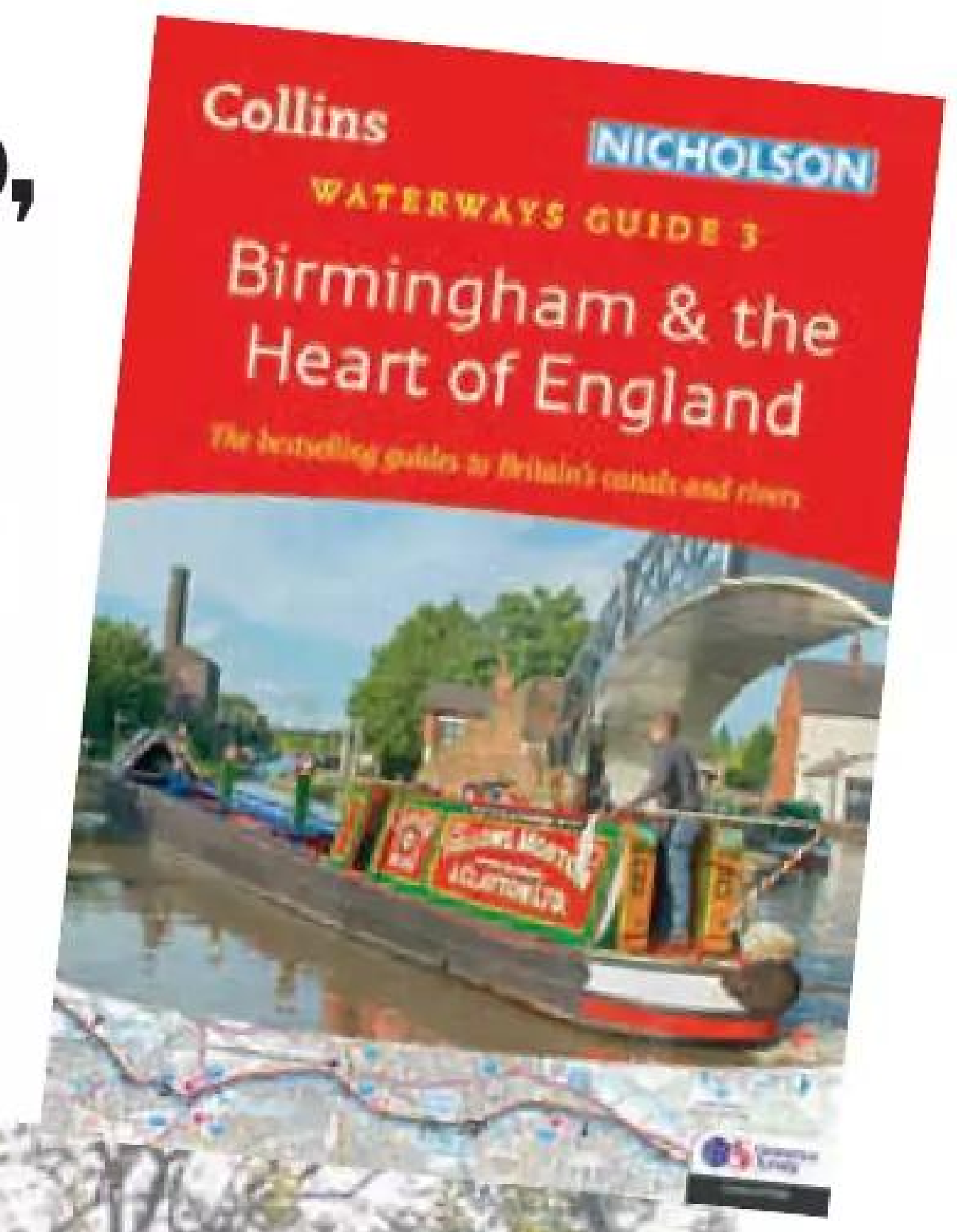
For an instant quote phone 'your insurance buddy' on 01483 237827 or visit www.narrowboatinsuranceuk.com

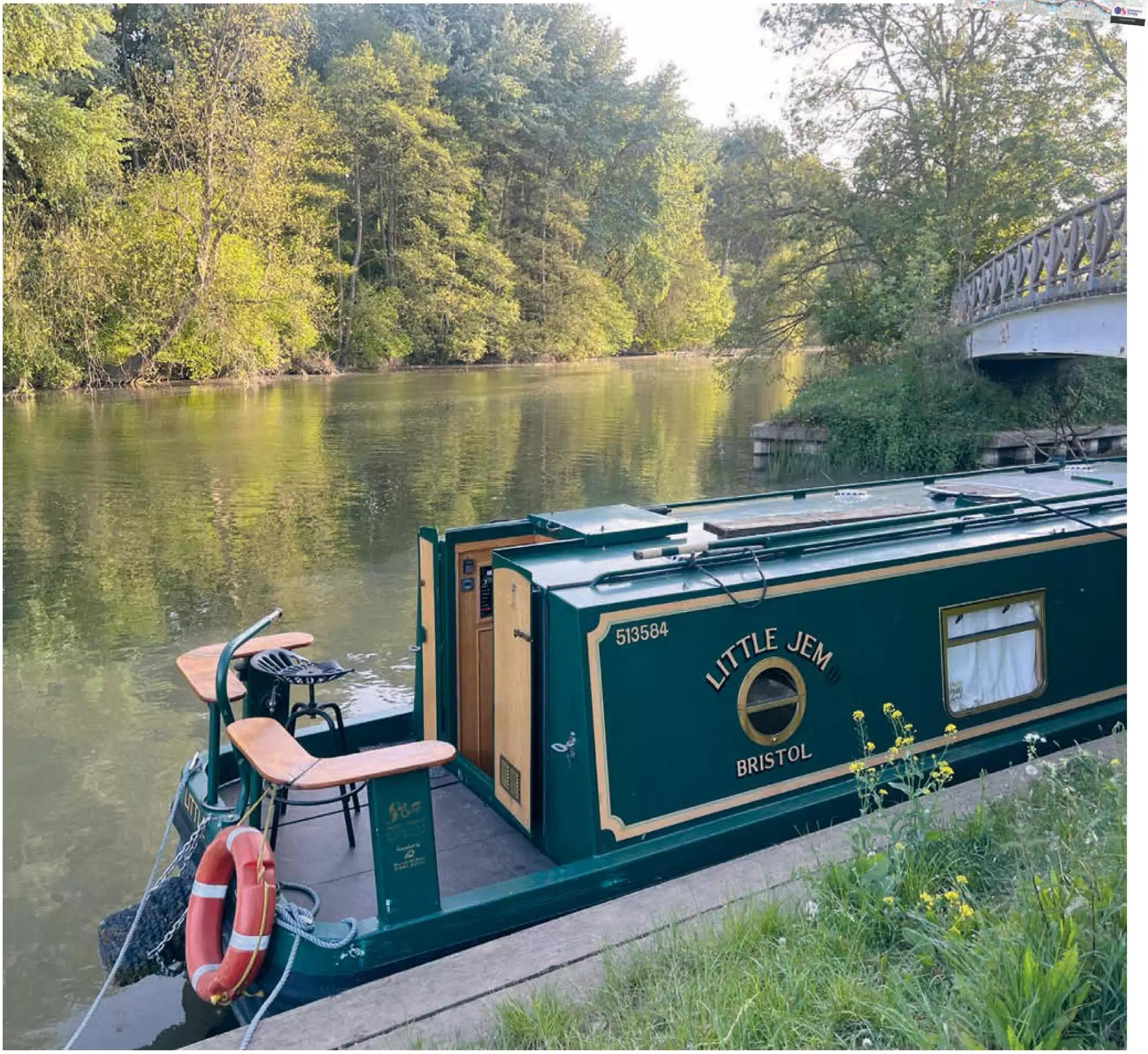
Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

THE BIG PICTURE

We all love to take photos of our beautiful inland waterways, and so, on these pages we are sharing your photos and giving away a complete set of Nicholson Waterways Guides (Published by Collins Nicholson) for the winner of CB Photo of the Month.

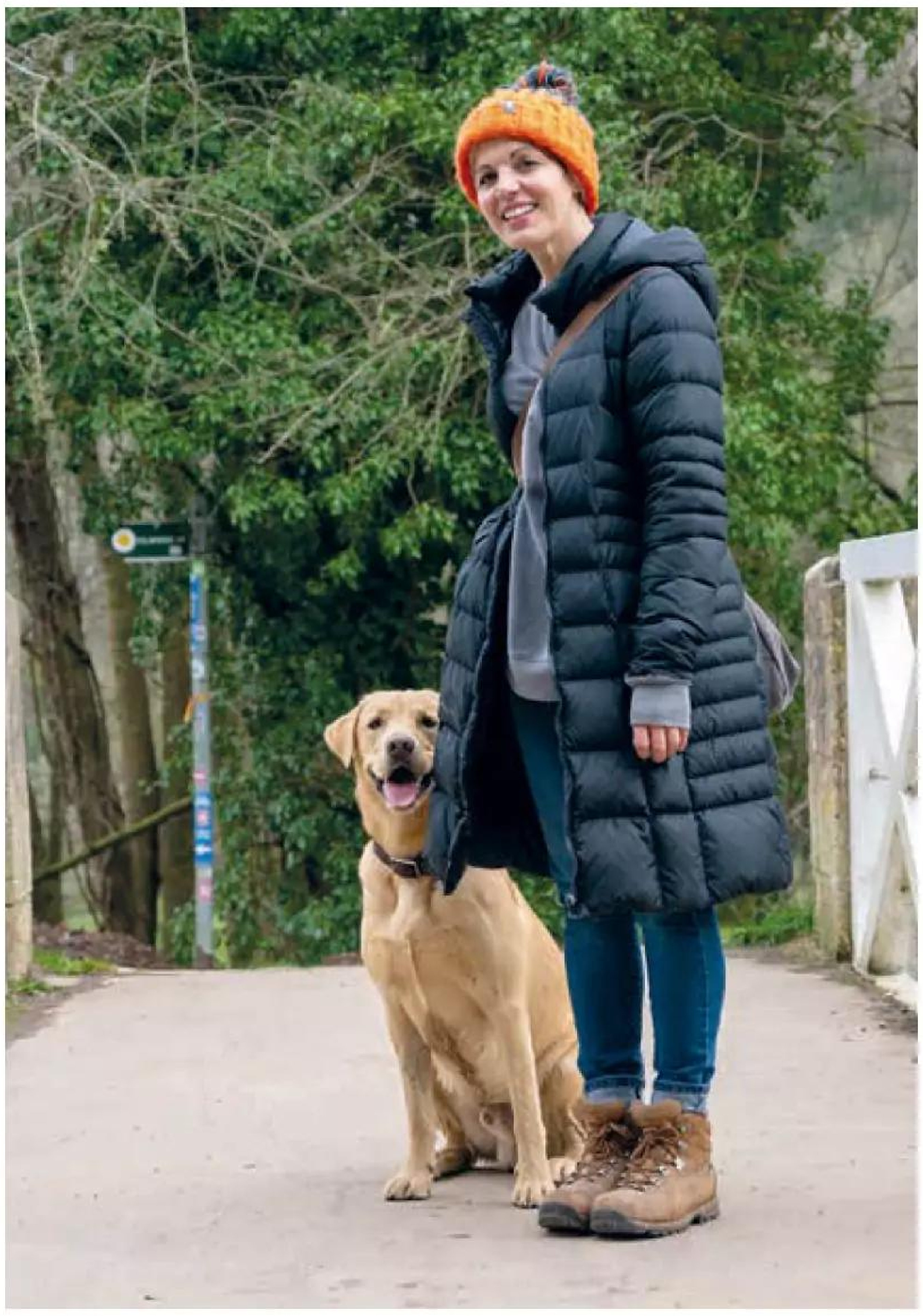
Winner of June's Photo of the Month was Chris Lawrence.


Collins
NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE 3
Birmingham & the Heart of England
The bestselling guides to Britain's canals and rivers

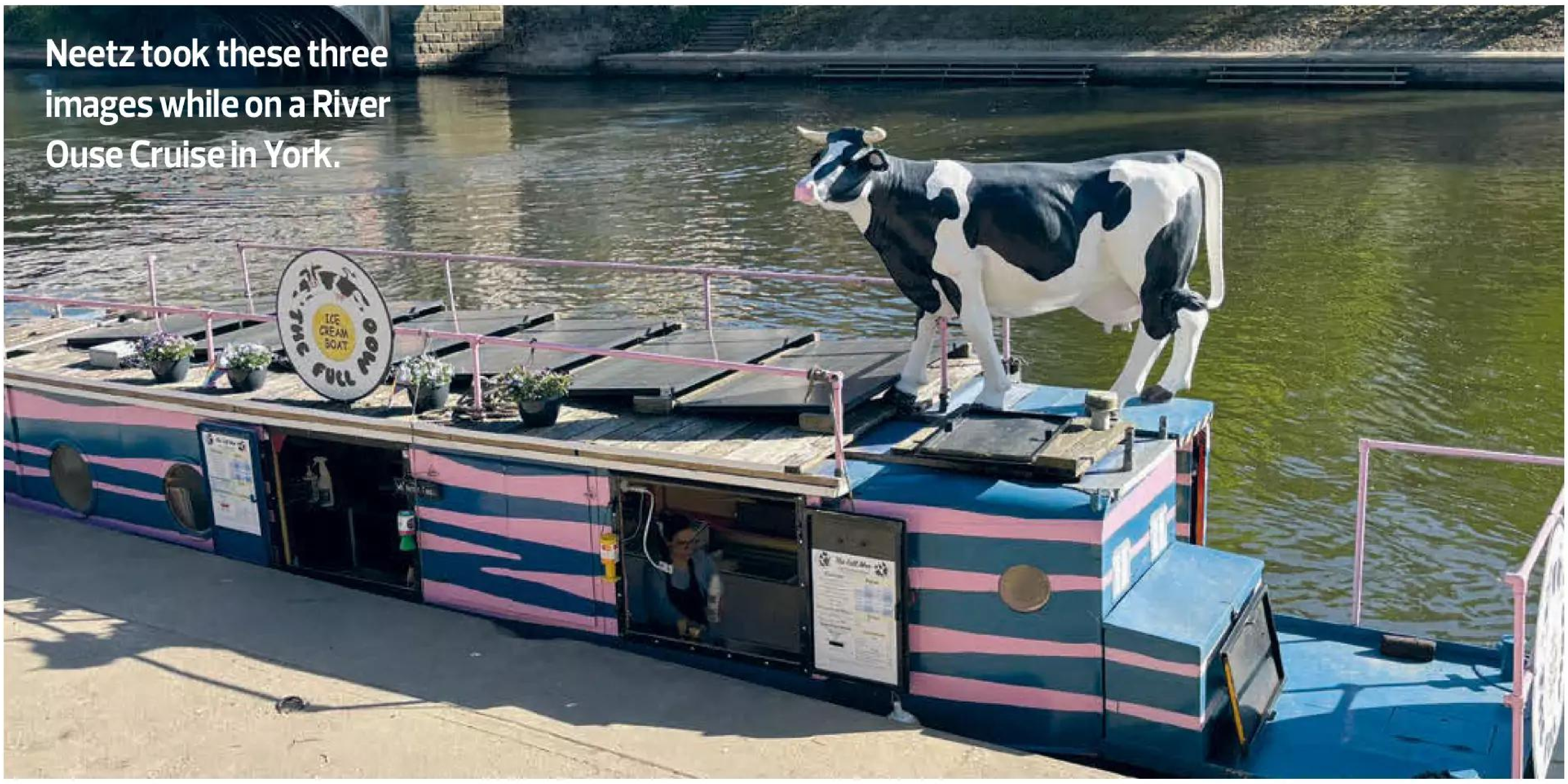

513584
LITTLE JEM
BRISTOL

On the Thames with the River Thame entering from the right. "I do know of boats up to 30 feet making it up the Thame as far as Dorchester – about a mile – but I wouldn't fancy it today, it looked shallow and overgrown in places. There is a lovely walk into Dorchester along the Thame, well worth doing," writes Ivor Flitman.

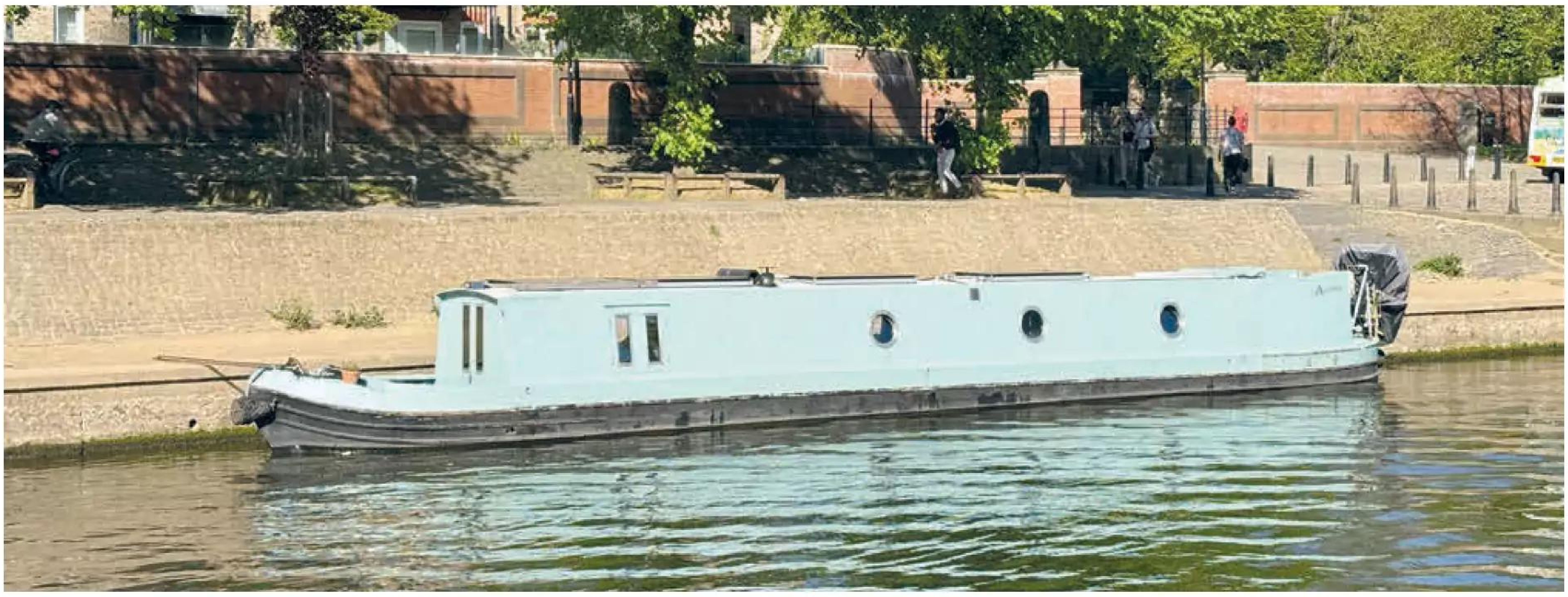
These pictures were taken by Aron Roberts while on a walk along the Kennet & Avon Canal between Bath and the Somerset Coal Canal at Dundas Aqueduct.

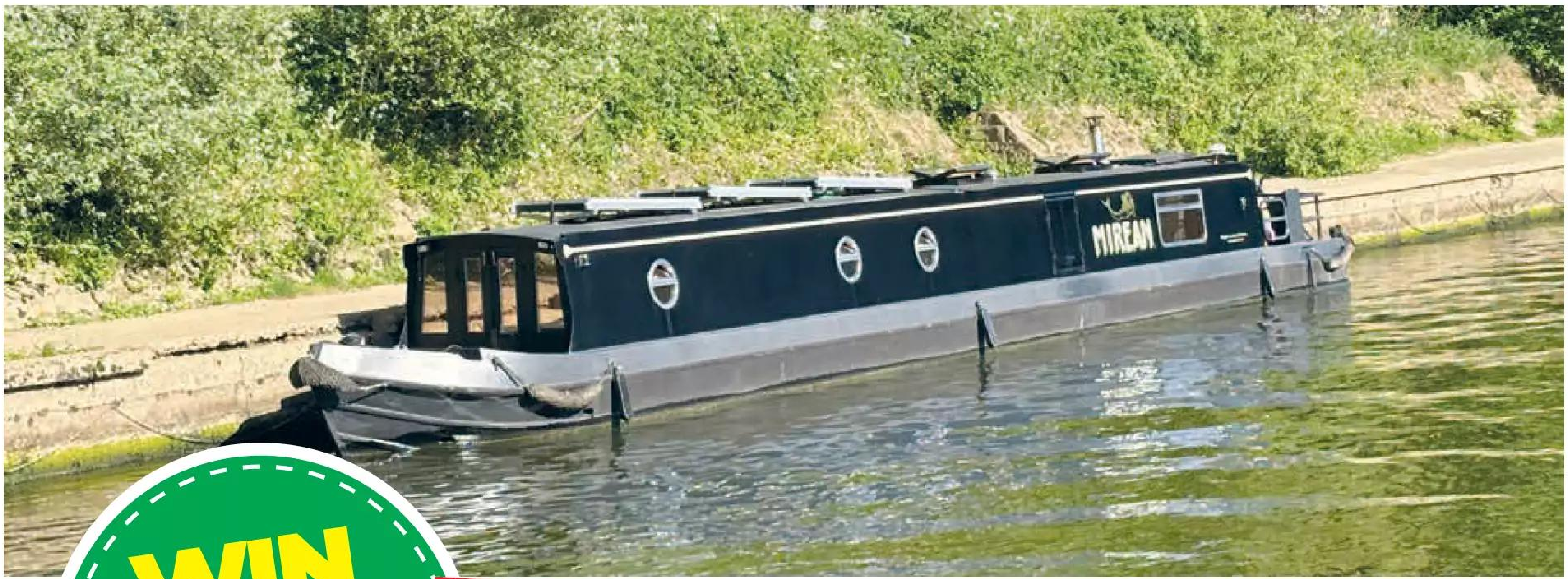


DEAD SLOW THROUGH MOORINGS PLEASE

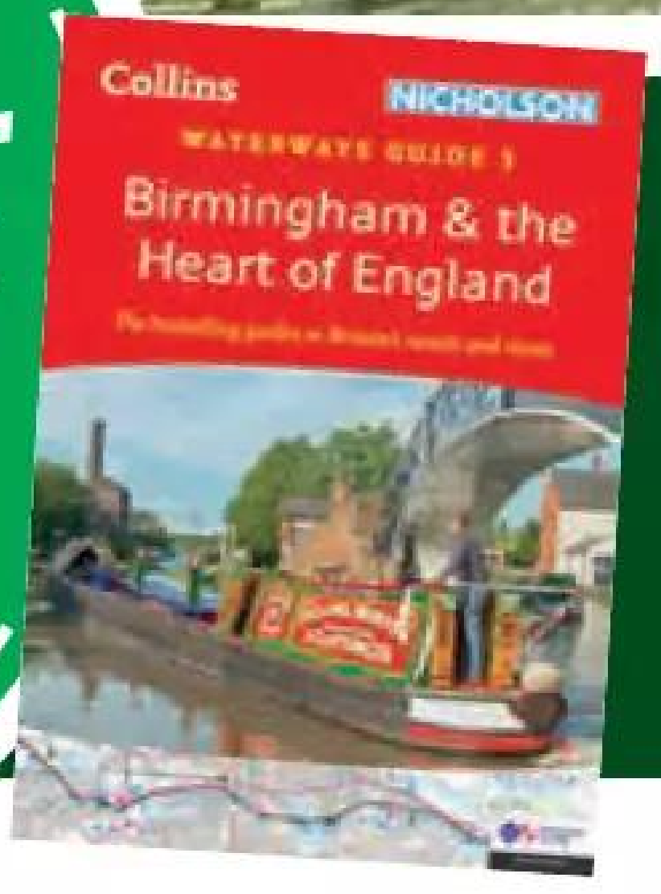

ICE CREAM BOAT
THE FULL MOO

Neetz took these three images while on a River Ouse Cruise in York.



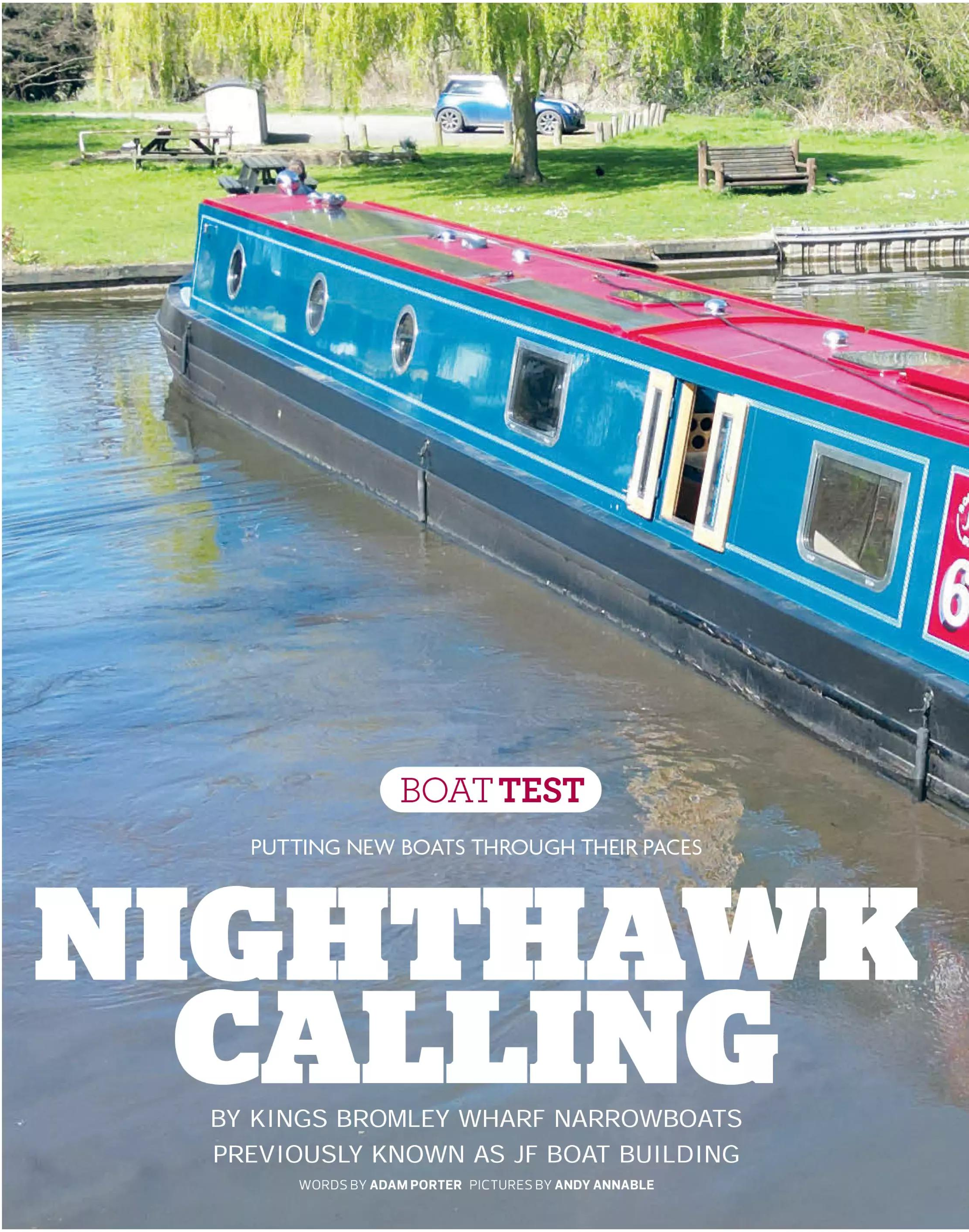


WIN
A COMPLETE SET OF NICHOLSON WATERWAYS GUIDES


Collins
NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE 3
Birmingham & the Heart of England

SEND IN YOUR PHOTOS!

If you would like to be in the next issue of Canal Boat send your photos to editor@canalboat.co.uk. Please include your name and where you took the photo. Please note photos JULY also appear on Canal Boat's Facebook page and newsletter.



BOAT **TEST**

PUTTING NEW BOATS THROUGH THEIR PACES

NIGHTHAWK CALLING

BY KINGS BROMLEY WHARF NARROWBOATS PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS JF BOAT BUILDING

WORDS BY **ADAM PORTER** PICTURES BY **ANDY ANNABLE**

NIGHTHAWK
CALLING

What's in a name? Well, in the boat building industry, quite a lot. When you've been reviewing boats for as long as I have (well over 15 years at the last count), you find that some names in the boat building business come and go, while others stick around with their reputations growing all the time. A boat built by a firm perceived to have a good name, is undoubtedly worth more.

But very occasionally, the business stays the same, it's just the name that changes. And that's what's happened to JF Boat Building. In the past year or so, Jamie Franklin has moved his firm to new premises – albeit only a few hundred yards away from the previous site – and can now do much more varied work on boats. So he's changed the name to reflect that, to Kings Bromley Wharf Narrowboats.

This boat, Nighthawk Calling, straddles both names. At the time of our test, it still said JF Boat Building on the side although that's now been repainted; but it's also the first boat shown at the Crick Boat Show under the Kings Bromley Wharf banner.

EXTERIOR

We could start with many aspects of the exterior of this boat, such as the fact it's 66ft long and a semi-trad, but the most eye-catching aspect is undoubtedly the teal colour scheme. It's absolutely beautiful, and looks particularly good when the sun is shining on it, as it was on the day of our test. The teal is teamed with a bright blue coachline, and red handrails – and the red continues over the whole roof. The bright blue is also picked up in the cushions which top the lockers at the bow and stern, made by Whalin Upholstery. It's a scheme which will undoubtedly turn heads, and rightly so. It's been properly thought through and really works.

The signwriting is by Steve Evans. The name will be familiar to fans of the tv comedy, 'Allo 'Allo – Nighthawk was René Artois' call sign when making contact with London.

The shell is by Tim Tyler, one of the best known names in steelwork. It has one of his curvy Josher style bows, and plenty of detailing. There are scrolls in the ends of the handrails, and there's a boatman's beam across the roof. There's also the hint of another boatman's beam towards the stern where there's a break in the handrails; the boat has an extra-long hatch, which gets in the way, so the beam merges gracefully into the roof.

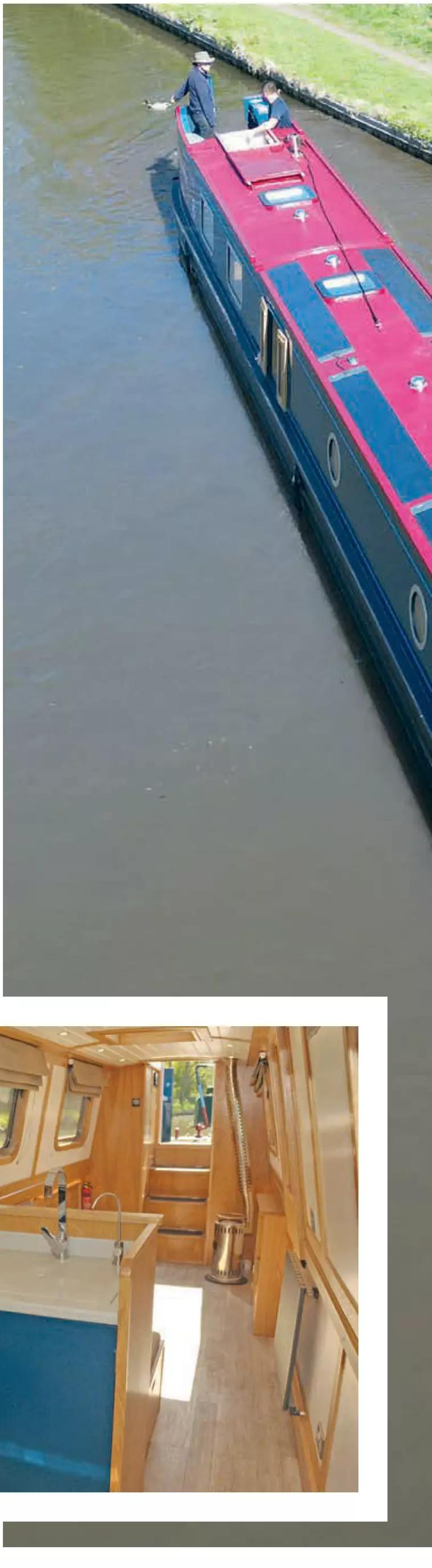
At the bow there's a big locker in the nose, which as this boat is gas-free, is available for storage. It has a large hatch for easy access and allows you to get to the bow thruster tube and its battery. The well deck has storage lockers both sides, which provide a nice place to sit. At the stern, there are more lockers on the semi-trad deck. The deck itself is covered in TekDek, a hardwearing and good looking option. There's a table which can be set up on a Desmo leg. Deck lights which are remote controlled are also fitted, so you can turn them on as you walk down the dark towpath after an evening at a canalside pub.

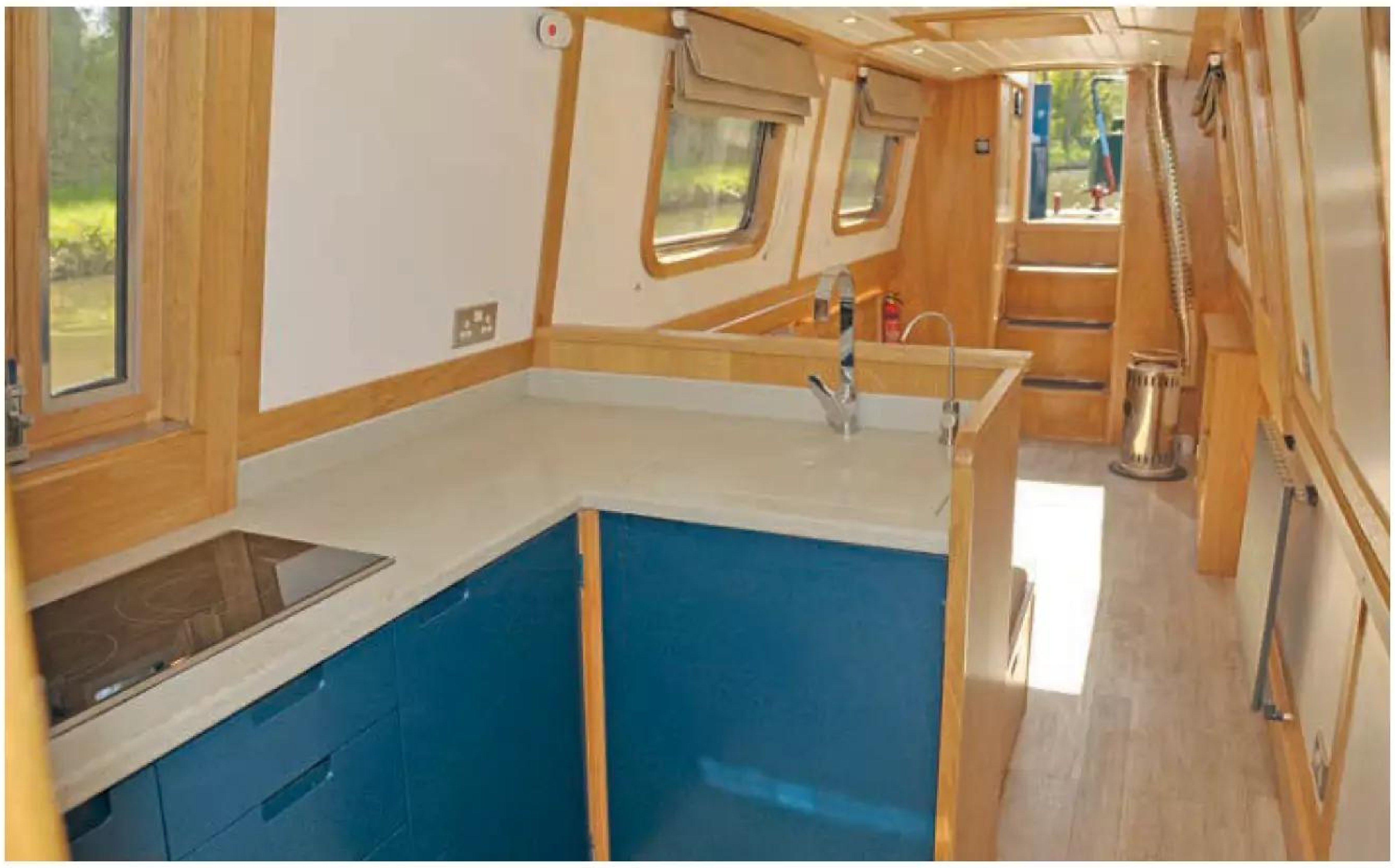
There are a couple of bonded windows in the roof. These started off as Houdini hatches, but as anyone who's had one will testify, they are notoriously difficult to make leak-free so were changed to be non-opening. The rest of the windows and portholes are by Caldwell's, and have a thermal break to prevent condensation.

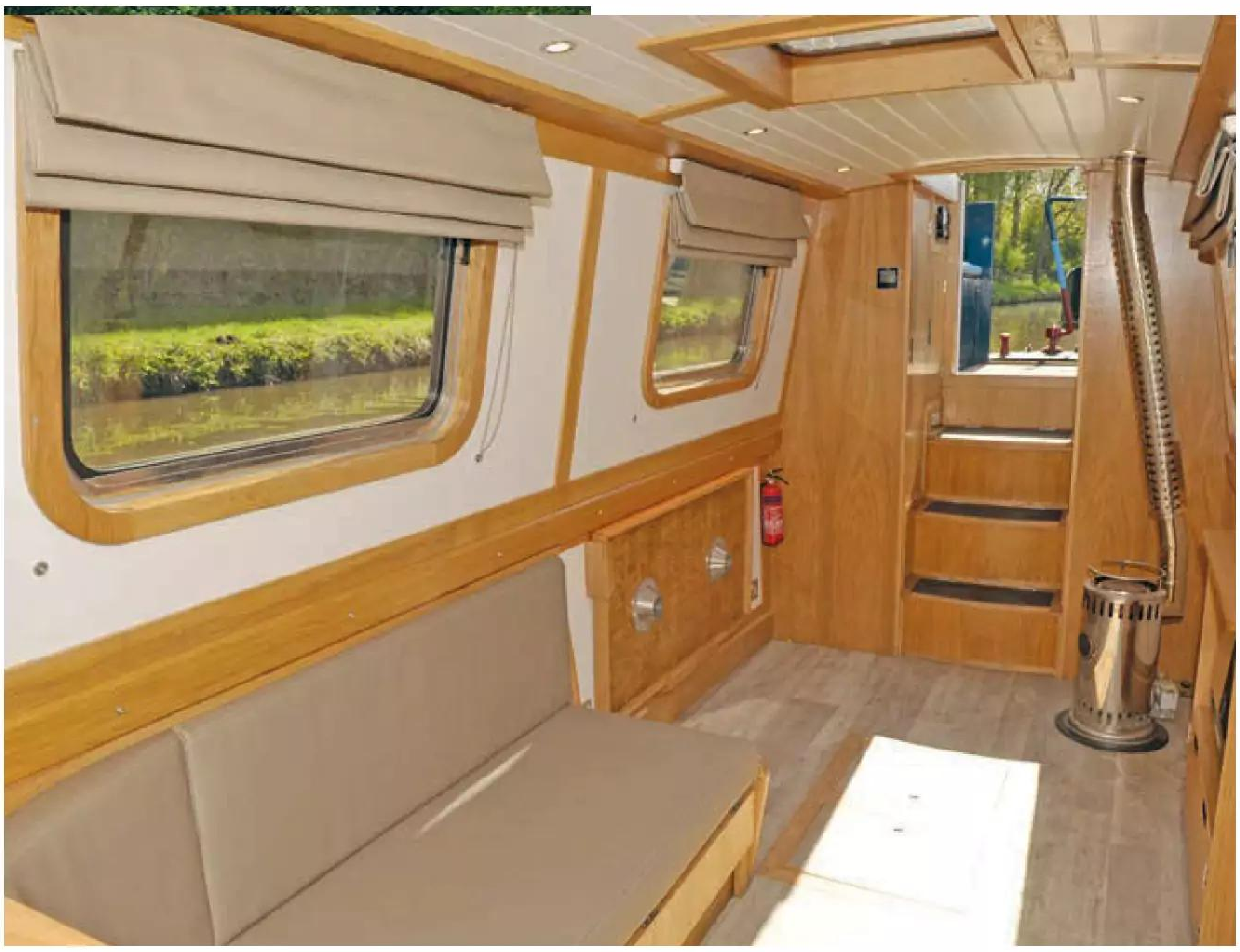
LAYOUT AND FITOUT

This is a reverse layout boat, but with the saloon at the stern leading into an L-shaped dinette. The galley is in the middle of the boat, which is an increasingly popular option. A cabin which can double as a day room comes next, then there's a walkthrough shower room. The main cabin is at the bow.

The fitout uses painted birch ply panels above and below the gunwales, with solid oak trim. All the furniture is also oak, with accents which reflect the teal colour from the outside. All the cupboard doors have been made with recessed handles, as the







owner wanted a sleek look, and the recesses have been painted teal.

The floor is Amtico, an LVT, (Luxury Vinyl Tile material), in a salvaged timber finish and laid in a boardwalk pattern using different sized planks.

SALOON AND DINETTE

Three steps lead down from the stern deck into the boat with the bottom two having lifting treads for storage; the top one doesn't open, as the loo holding tank is across the boat at this level. There are cupboards on each side; one is the electrical cupboard, while on the other side, one houses the calorifier, and another has a radiator inside to help dry wet coats.

Most of the room is left open for freestanding furniture (the owners apparently favour bean bags to lounge on), but there's also a Lockgate Refleks diesel stove on a small round hearth in one corner. An under-gunwale unit houses a tv and has some cupboard space.

The dinette is L-shaped, and converts into a guest double bed, and there's storage in the base. The fabric used for the cushions is also used for the roman blinds at each of the windows. The table, which stands on Desmo legs, can be stored under the gunwale when not in use. There's a set of side doors opposite the dinette, and one of the skylights is above so the area is flooded with light.

Thinking of selling your boat?

Competitive commission rates all inclusive of VAT | Professional service

Sign up to our mailing list
For all our latest boat details

Boats Wanted
Buyers Waiting

Tickled Pink **£40,000**

A 55ft 2002 Liverpool Boat Co. 4 berth cruiser stern narrowboat

Location: Kings Orchard Marina Tel: 01543 433608

Lilibet **£16,000**

A 23ft 1990 Springer Engineering 2 berth cruiser stern narrowboat

Location: Nantwich Canal Centre Tel: 01270 625122

ADAGIO
WORCESTER

Adagio **£43,000**

A 55ft 2000 Severn Valley Boat Centre 4 berth semi-traditional stern narrowboat

Location: Worcester Marina Tel: 01905 734160

Willow Inaya **£45,000**

A 54ft 1989 Black Prince Narrowboats 4 berth cruiser stern narrowboat

Location: New Mills Marina Tel: 01663 741310

Heidi **£64,950**

A 52ft 2009 Pro-Build Narrowboats 4 berth cruiser stern narrowboat

Location: Anderton Marina Tel: 01606 79642

Jessica **£22,000**

A 30ft 1979 Hancock & Lane 2 berth cruiser stern narrowboat

Location: Goytre Wharf Tel: 01873 880516

360° VIRTUAL TOURS

abcboatsales

BRITISH MARINE
BOAT RETAILERS & BROKERS

ABC BOAT SALES

For details on moorings and our other services go to **everythingcanalboats.com**

Aldermaston Wharf, Padworth, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 4JS | **Alvechurch Marina,** Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, B48 7SQ | **Anderton Marina,** Uplands Road, Anderton, Cheshire, CW9 6AJ
Blackwater Meadow Marina, Birch Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 9DD | **Fazeley Mill Marina,** Coleshill Road, Fazeley, Tamworth, B78 3SE | **Gayton Marina,** Blisworth Arm, Northamptonshire, NN7 3ER
Grove Lock Marina, Grove, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 0QU | **Goytre Wharf,** Llanover, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 9EW | **Hilperton Marina,** Hammond Way, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8RS
Kings Orchard Marina, Broad Lane, Huddlesford, Lichfield, WS13 8SP | **New Mills Marina,** Hibbert Street, New Mills, Derbyshire, SK22 3JJ | **Springwood Haven Marina,** Mancetter Rd, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV10 0RZ
Whitchurch Marina, Wrexham Road, Whitchurch, SY13 3AA | **Worcester Marina,** Lowesmoor Wharf, Worcester, WR1 2RS | **Wrenbury Mill Marina,** Wrenbury, Near Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 8HG

TEKDEK

- LOOKS AND FEELS JUST LIKE TEAK
- SUPERB NON-SLIP QUALITIES
- CAN BE JET WASHED
- PRACTICALLY MAINTENANCE FREE
- STAIN RESISTANT
- 5 COLOUR OPTIONS
- 3 CAULK COLOUR OPTIONS

FLEXIBLE PANELS

Tek-Dek Flexible Panels

TEMPLATING/ INSTALLATION SERVICE AVAILABLE

Tek-Dek Tel: 01420 587802
www.tek-dek.com | info@tek-dek.com

GALLEY

This is where the teal colour makes a full-scale reappearance, with all the cupboard doors painted this colour. They're teamed with Corian worktops in a grey speckled finish. The sink is stainless steel, but has a Corian lid, so you can hide your washing up until you're ready to do it; there's also a storage place for the lid when not in use. The sink has a smart arched tap, and a separate one for filtered water. Underneath is a small washing machine behind a door.

Other equipment includes a Neff oven with a slide and hide door, set at eye level. There's an integrated fridge underneath. The hob is a two-zone induction also by Neff. There's a set of glazed side doors above, so you can cook with a view and can easily get some ventilation. The other skylight is in the galley, making the whole room light and bright.

To maximise storage there are drawers in the plinths, and there's a wine cellar in the floor. As it's close to the baseplate, it stays cool.

SECOND CABIN

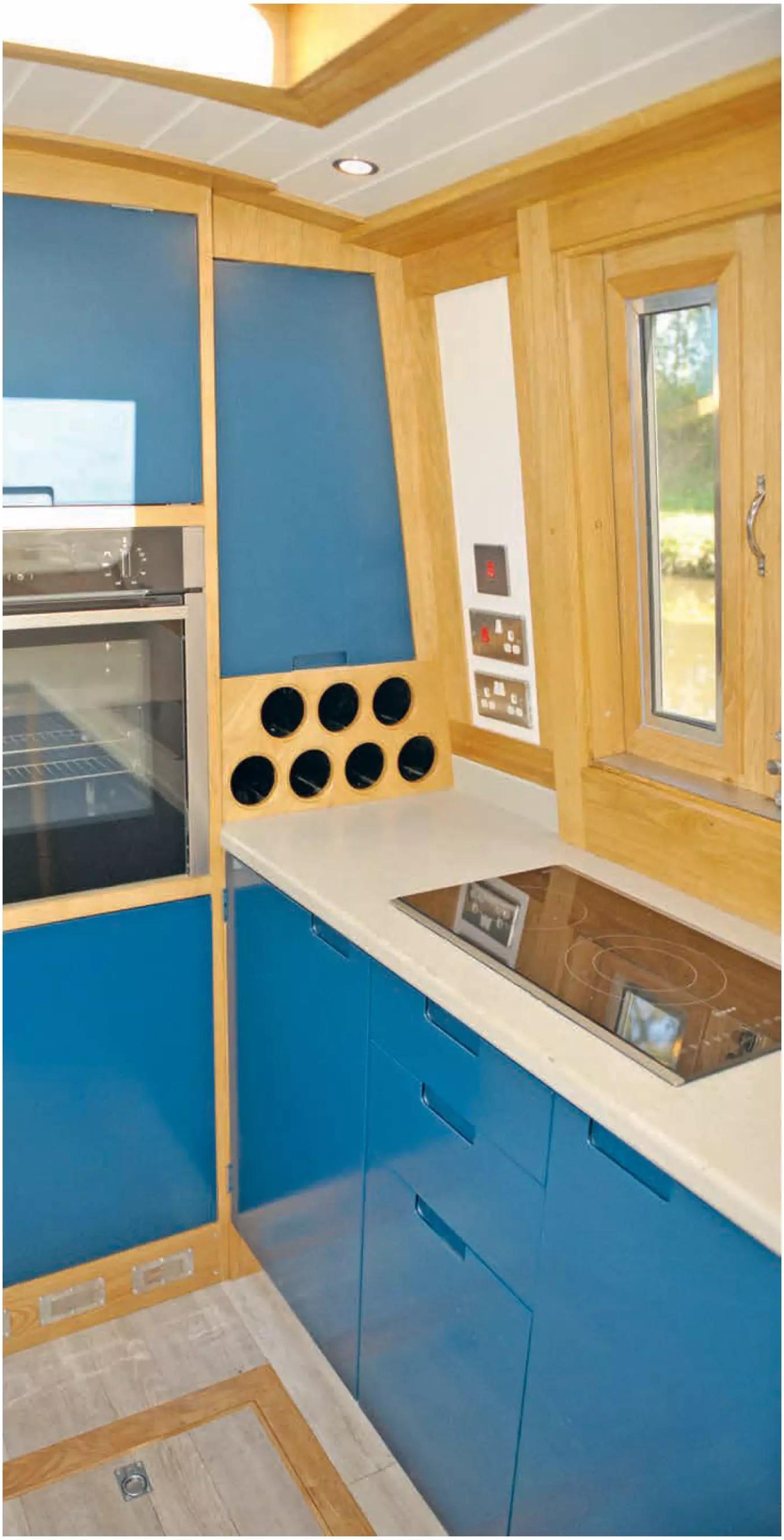
The owners have a teenage son, so wanted him to have his own room. But this cabin can also be set up as a dayroom, for when he no longer wants to go on holiday with his parents. During the day, the bed works as bench seating, and there's even a pop-out shelf ideal for a tablet or laptop. But the seating then pulls out to form a double bed.

There's plenty of storage in the form of wardrobes and drawers, and there are high level cupboards. As this room is in the centre of the boat, one of the cupboards houses the router for the Maxview Roam 5G system, linked to a small antenna on the roof.

SHOWER ROOM

The shower cubicle is a generous 900mm quadrant, lined with a laminate shower board in a tile effect. The shower itself has a very impressive rainfall showerhead, with a Corian surround. All the Corian in the boat is worked in-house at Kings Bromley Wharf.

On the opposite side of the room is a curved unit; curved doors like this are difficult and time consuming to make. The unit has a Corian worktop with a round white basin on top. The unit also features a clever built-in loo roll holder. The toilet itself is a macerating unit by Tecma.



ON THE WATER

This is a longer boat than many, but as you might expect from a Tim Tyler shell it handles extremely well; Tim Tyler boats have long swims at the bow and the stern, which helps water move along the hull and into the propeller, improving handling. The boat responds positively to the tiller and goes exactly where you point it. We winded with no difficulty at all, and if you do need a bit of assistance the bow thruster is powerful enough to help. We even did a distance in reverse, and found the boat stayed in a straight line.

From the helm, the tiller is at a nice height and the Morse control falls easily to hand. The bow thruster buttons are also easy to see and use. For crew, there's plenty of space on the semi-trad rear deck to join the helmsman, and you even have somewhere to sit.

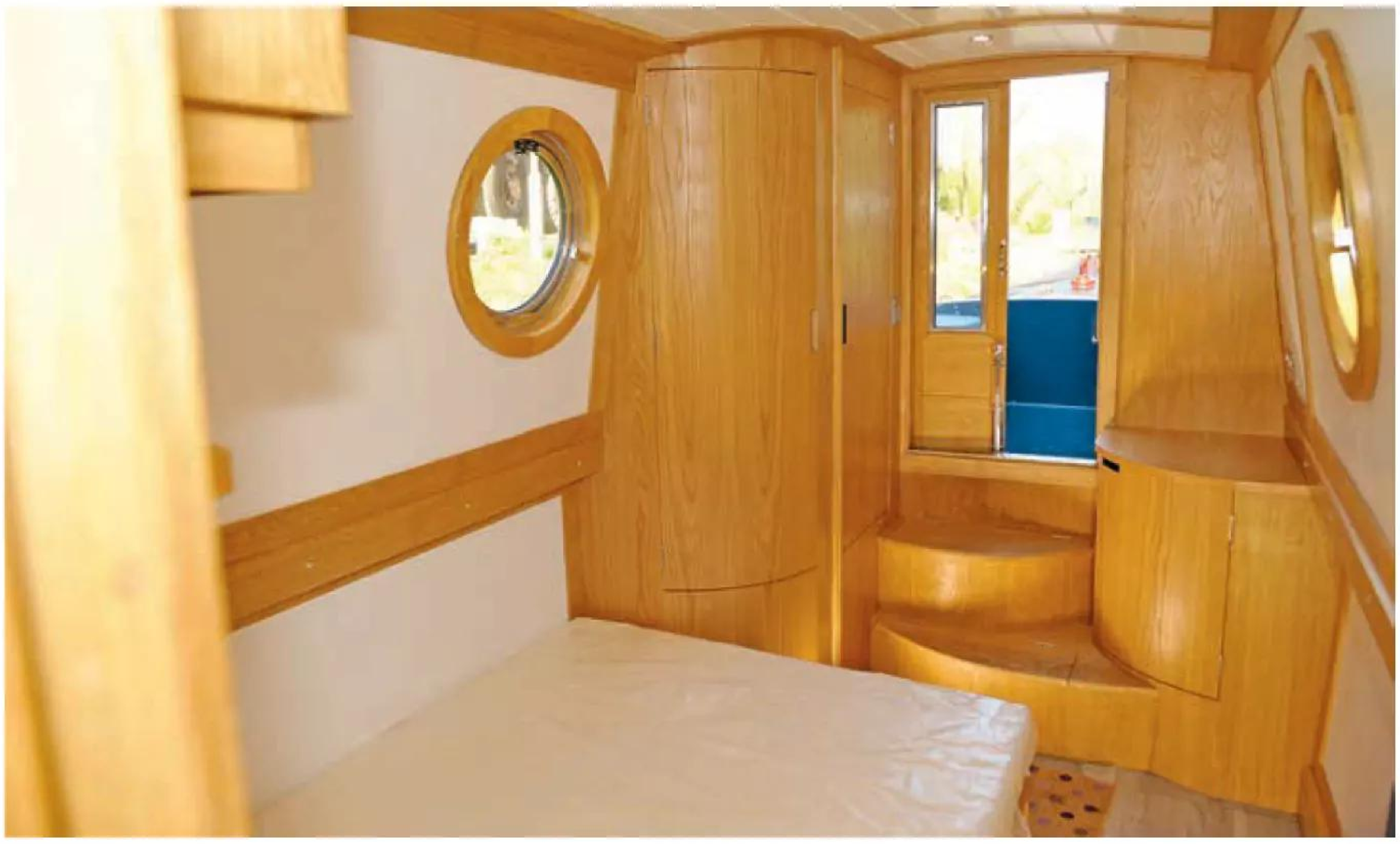
The engine is very quiet, thanks to the acoustic housing and to sound insulation under the deck board.

There's an awful lot to like about this boat – from the eye-catching and colourful exterior, to an unusual but flexible layout.

CABIN

The 4ft inline bed slides out to make a 4ft 6in double. With the loo tank being at the stern, the whole of the bed base is available for storage. There are high level cupboards above the head of the bed, plus a little shelf with reading lights underneath.

There are curves aplenty at the forward end of the room. Firstly, there's a large wardrobe with a curved door, which has shelves inside. Another wardrobe offers hanging space. The steps up to the well deck are also curved and have lifting treads for storage, and from them rises a low-level unit with a curved front. The lack of sharp corners means the room feels very boaty, and the making of the curved doors in particular shows a level of skill. Glazed doors lead out to the deck.



6
NIGHTHAWK
CALLING

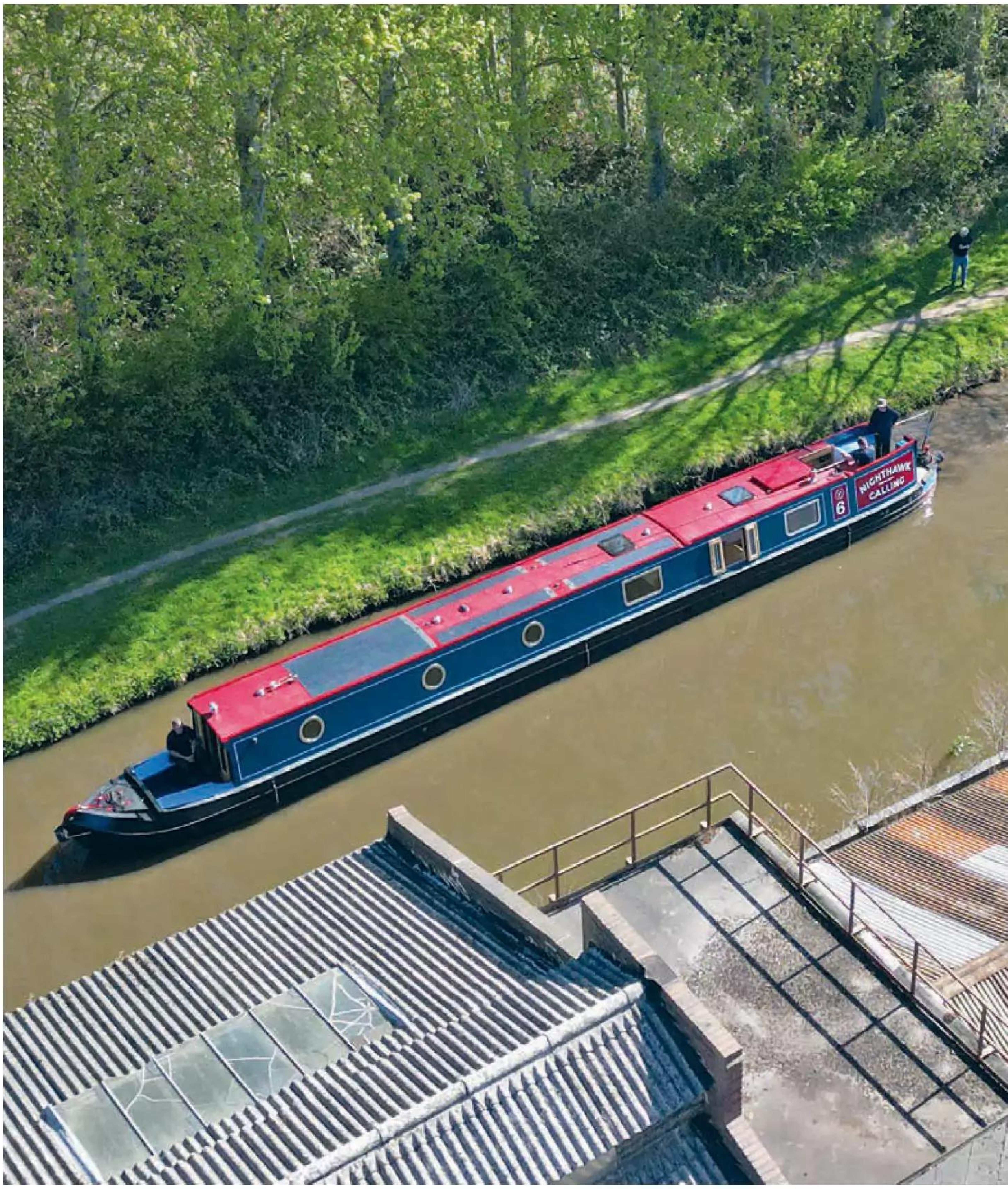
TECHNICAL

This boat is powered by a Beta 50 engine, so it has plenty of power, even for what is a relatively long and heavy boat. It's cocooned in a housing for quietness. There's also a Vetus 75kgf bow thruster to help with manoeuvring.

The electrical system is mostly 24-volt, but there's also a step-down to 12 volts for the items which need it. There are six 150Ah AGM batteries, and a 230-volt supply comes from an 8kw Victron Quattro inverter charger. There's also a 3.5kva TravelPower engine-driven generator; this means the owners can run appliances when away from a shoreline without using their battery bank.

To help charge the batteries, there's a significant solar array. There's a large 500-watt panel, and four of 125 watts, chosen just because of the way they fit on the roof. They have two Victron MPPT controllers. There are connections for a shoreline at both the bow and the stern.

Central heating comes from a Webasto diesel boiler.



THE BUILDERS

KINGS BROMLEY WHARF NARROWBOATS

Jamie Franklin set up his firm in 2022, after working for another bespoke boat builder and for himself as a joiner. He was initially based at a small marina just outside Lichfield on the Trent and Mersey Canal. But he soon outgrew the facilities there, and has now taken over Kings Bromley Wharf – which in canal terms is just the other side of a bridge from his previous base, or just over the road if you're living in the real world.

The site has been a boat yard for decades – in fact, Jamie found it marked as a such on an old map at the Black Country Living Museum. But in recent years the site has been unused and had fallen into some disrepair.

But for a boat firm, it offers lots of space and lots of scope. Jamie has bought and installed a large crane capable of lifting boats of up to 22 tonnes in and out of the water, and that alone has opened up a wealth of possibilities. The hard-standing he has available means he can offer services such as blacking, painting, welding and hull repairs, along with repairs, and full and partial refits, as well as new boat building. He's planning to install a couple of polytunnels so work can be carried out under cover, which will undoubtedly mean more flexibility.

The building on site is being converted into joinery workshops and offices, but such was the state of the building that it's very much a work in progress.

The additional work means the company now employs five people, including Jamie. It's great to see new life being breathed into a site like this, and a business expanding to fill it.

CONCLUSION

There's an awful lot to like about this boat – from the eye-catching and colourful exterior, to an unusual but flexible layout. The paint colour shows that bold choices can work if they're done right (and, let's be honest, make a nice change from the greys which have been in vogue for some time now). Not everyone will see an extra bedroom as a necessity, but making it double as a day room or even a workspace means it's endlessly useful. The workmanship on show is of a generally high standard, with excellent joinery.

This boat cost around £220,000, although Jamie Franklin says that if you ordered a similar one now, he'd probably have to charge a little more, because of the continuing rise in the price of materials. But you are getting a lot of boat for your money, and the longer a boat is, the more work is involved in building it.

JF Boat Building had been gaining a reputation for good quality work, and for any company to change name is something of a risk.

But with the firm's new location and the significant widening of the services it offers, the switch to Kings Bromley Wharf Narrowboats makes perfect sense. And if this boat is anything to go by, the company's reputation is safe.

SPECIFICATIONS

£220,000

LENGTH:	66ft
BEAM:	6ft 10in
SHELL:	Tim Tyler Boats www.timtylerboats.com
STYLE:	Semi trad
LAYOUT:	Reverse
BERTHS:	2+2+2
FIT-OUT:	Painted panels and oak
ENGINE:	Beta 50 www.betamarine.co.uk
INVERTER:	Victron 8kw www.victronenergy.com
CONTACT:	Kings Bromley Wharf Narrowboats

Kings Bromley Wharf, Kings Bromley, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 8HS
07949 043455
info@kbwnarrowboats.com
www.kbwnarrowboats.com

HLY
HIGH LINE YACHTING LTD

Your 'ONE-STOP' for boating requirements on the Southern Grand Union

At Packet Boat Marina, Cowley
Full length covered wet dock available for hire • Boat painting & signwriting
Full woodworking workshop • Everyday chandlery • Gas, diesel & solid fuels

At Iver, Slough Arm
Hull sandblasting & repainting with either epoxy or bitumen systems
Craning for surveys or repairs • Full welding & fabrication service
Fully stocked chandlery with full Boatmans Cabin range of brassware & gift
Gas, diesel, coal & pumpout

At Northolt, Paddington Arm
Everyday chandlery • Temporary & overnight moorings free of charge for up to 7 nights
Gas, diesel, coal & pumpout

HEATING, WATER AND ELECTRICAL installations and repairs
Full engineering workshop for all your servicing and repairs
BROKERAGE for narrowboats and wide beams in conjunction with
VIRGINIA CURRER MARINE - premier broker in the South
FULLY SERVICED RESIDENTIAL & CRUISING BERTHS AT BOTH IVER
& NORTHOLT TOGETHER WITH DRY STORAGE & FIT OUT FACILITIES

The Boatyard, Mansion Lane, Iver, Bucks SL0 9RG
T: 01753 651496 / 653151
enquiries@high-line.co.uk | www.high-line.co.uk

THE *SECRET* TO REMOVING UNWANTED DAMP & MOULD

DISCOVER THE INGENIOUS DESIGN BEHIND OUR HIGH QUALITY THERMAL BREAK WINDOWS THAT HELP IMPROVE THE COMFORT OF YOUR BOAT.

- Don't let damp and mould compromise your health.
- Save on energy bills without sacrificing comfort or safety.
- Say goodbye to indoor chills and outdoor heatwaves.
- Enhanced security features for added peace of mind.
- Personalise your windows to match your boat's colour scheme.

"Just wanted to say how pleased we are with the new boat windows. The reduction in drafts, outside noise and the elimination of condensation is a game changer. The fitters were great guys, who were polite, courteous and tidy. A credit to Channelglaze."

Sally Holloway , N/B This Is Me

CHANNEL GLAZE LTD

TO FIND OUT MORE CALL US ON
0121 706 5777

Only LeeSan truly specialise in toilets

Toilets, Tanks, Hoses, Clips, Gauges, Deck Fittings, Vent Filters and everything you need *plus* Advice & Guidance

Heads above the rest on the water ...

Supported by our Worldwide Spares Delivery Service

sales@leesan.com
T: 01295 770000

LeeSan
Marine • Welfare • Leisure

bubble

keep warm this
Winter
with a bubble stove

Stoves,
Cookers
& Boilers
+ Accessories

Visit our website for the full range of solid fuel & oil stoves

HARWORTH
HEATING

www.harworthheating.co.uk
01302 742520
contact@harworthheating.co.uk
GOOD HOT SOUP
HVO
MADE IN BRITAIN

CanalBoat

HOW TO ORDER:

Offer code:
CB25PGA

○ UK – 1year: (12 issues) for £47.90 saving 48% a year*

○ UK – 1 year (12 issues) by cheque or debit/credit card at £50.90 saving £45% a year

For international offers, please visit:
shop.kelsey.co.uk/canal-boat-magazine

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Forename ____________________
Surname ____________________
Address ____________________
____
____________________ Postcode/Zip code ____________________
Country ____________________ Mobile ____________________
Email ____________________

IF DELIVERY ADDRESS IS DIFFERENT, COMPLETE BELOW

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Forename ____________________
Surname ____________________
Address ____________________
____
____________________ Postcode/Zip code ____________________
Country ____________________ Mobile ____________________
Email ____________________

Canal Boat (part of Kelsey Media) may contact you with promotions and special offers relating to you as a Canal Boat reader. You can opt-out or unsubscribe at any time**.
Please let us know if you would prefer not to be contacted in this way.
☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Telephone ☐ SMS. We will not pass your details on to third party companies.

Direct Debit

○ **I wish to subscribe by Direct Debit payments of £47.90 every 12 months. I understand that my subscription will continue at the same rate, with payments taken every 12 months – unless I write to tell you otherwise.**

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Name of Bank ____________________
Address ____________________
____
____________________ Postcode ____________________
Account Name
Sort code ☐☐☐☐☐☐ Acc. no ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Signature ____________________ Date ____________________

Originator's ID number
8 3 7 3 8 3

Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction are subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Kelsey Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Debit/credit card

○ **UK – 1 year (12 issues) at £50.90**

○ Please debit my: ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard

Card no ☐☐☐☐/☐☐☐☐/☐☐☐☐/☐☐☐☐
Security no ☐☐☐ Valid from / Expiry date /
Signature ____________________ Date ____________________

Cheque

○ **I enclose a cheque for £50.90 made payable to Kelsey Publishing Limited (must be from a UK bank account. Please write your name and address on the back of the cheque).**

(UK ONLY) PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:

FREEPOST KELSEY MEDIA

Terms & Conditions: Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. Offers available for UK customers only. *UK Direct Debit offer only. Savings are calculated based on the Basic Annual Rate using the standard cover price plus a standard postage price per issue. Your subscription will start with the next available issue, and you will receive 12 issues in a year. Offer ends 30/09/2025. Prices correct at time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions visit shop.kelsey.co.uk /terms. **We take great care in handling your personal details and these will only ever be used as set out in our privacy policy which can be viewed at shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy. You may unsubscribe at any time.

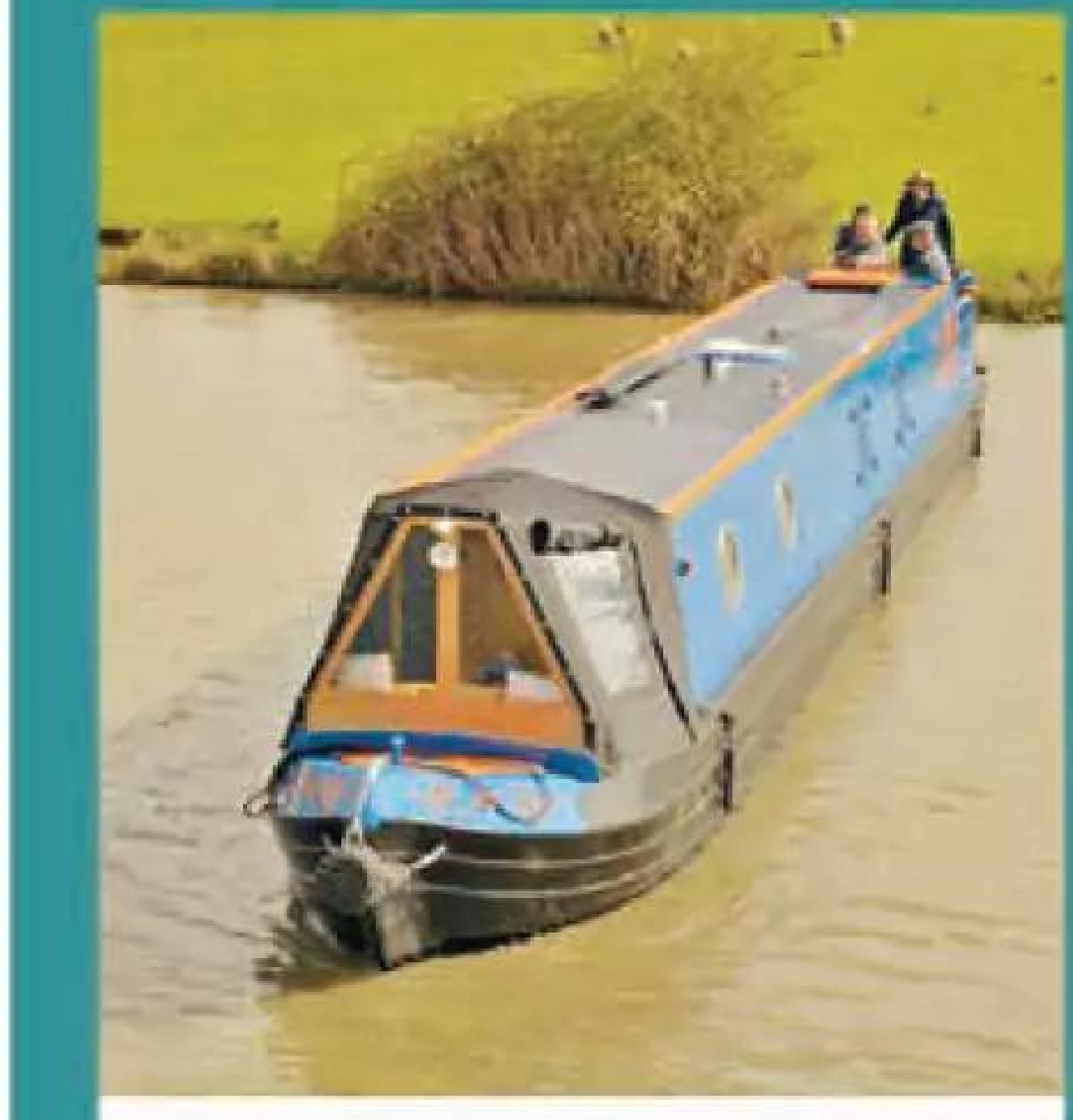
Hello reader,

Canal Boat magazine is an essential read for anyone with an interest in British Waterways, it is written by boaters for boaters and keeps you up-to-date on boating holidays, safety on the water, boat tests, cruise guides, boat shows, living on a boat and all the latest waterways news. So, why not join the many subscribers and save yourself some money on shop prices. Not only will you save money, but each issue will be delivered directly to your door, plus, you will receive our up-to-date informative newsletter, which contains features, boat tests, cruise guides, news and much more. **Don't delay – sign up today and start saving money. We would like to welcome you on board!**

Charlie

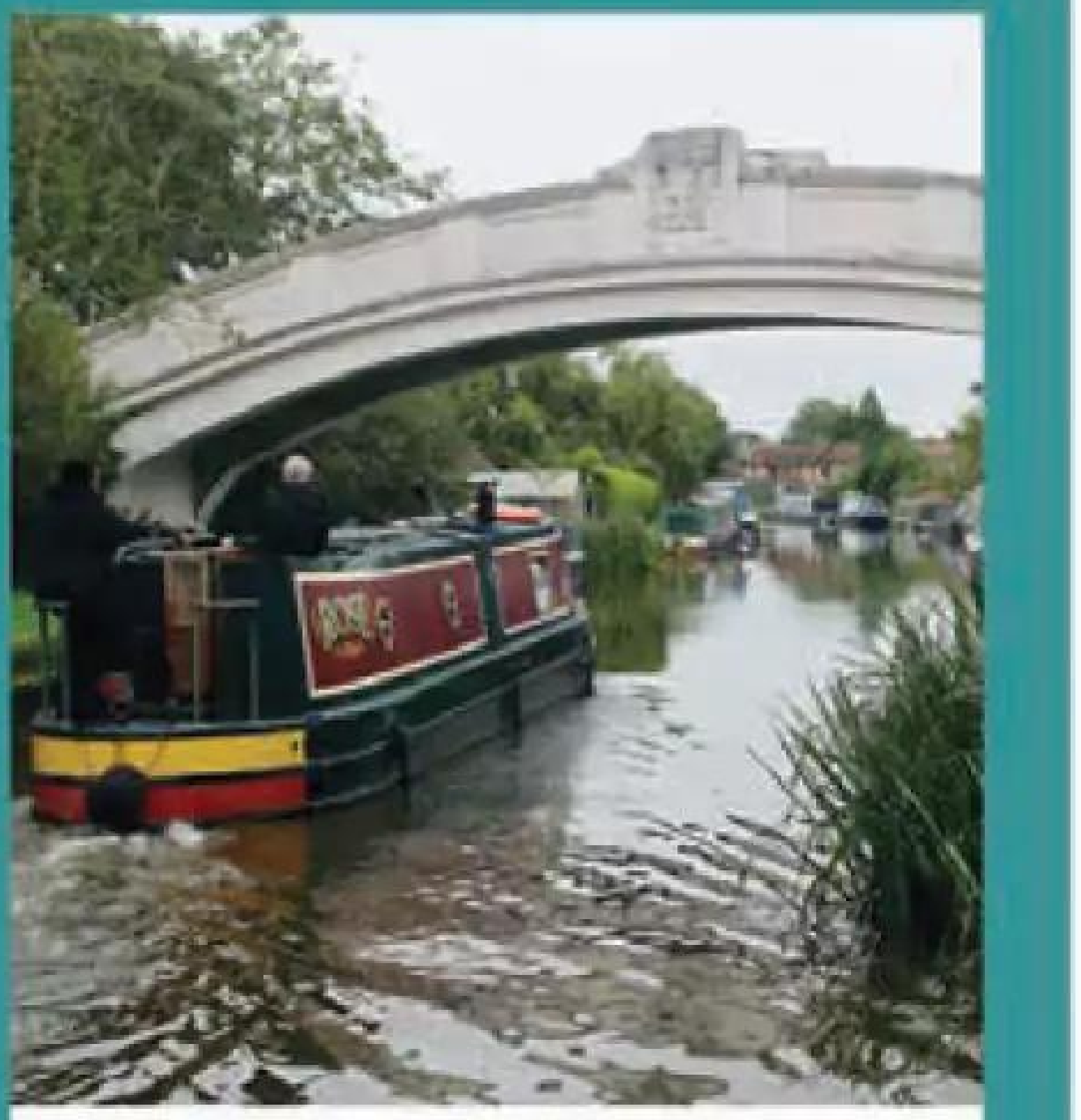
Charlie Waters, Editor

INSIDE EVERY ISSUE



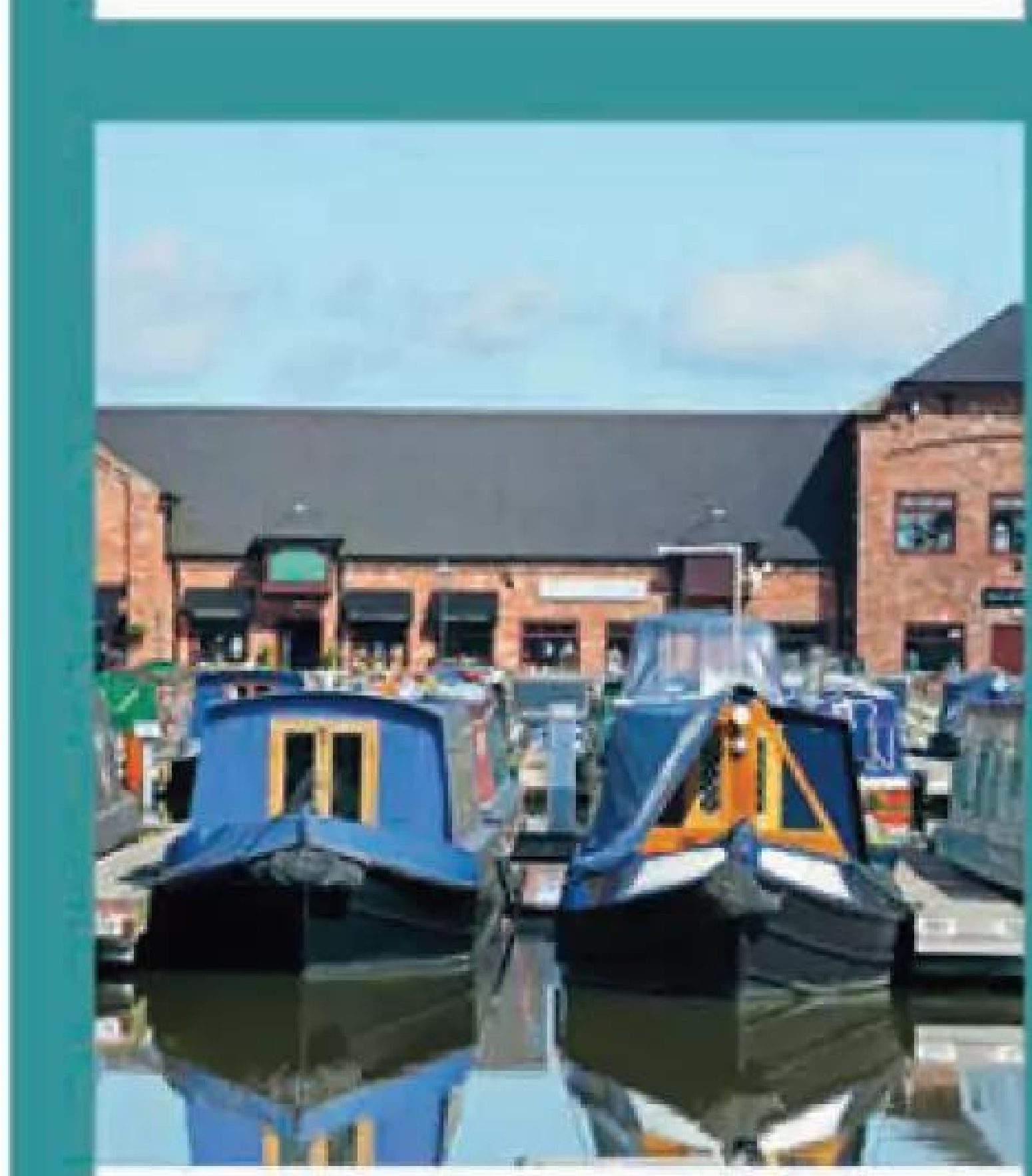
BOAT TEST

A different boat is featured each month



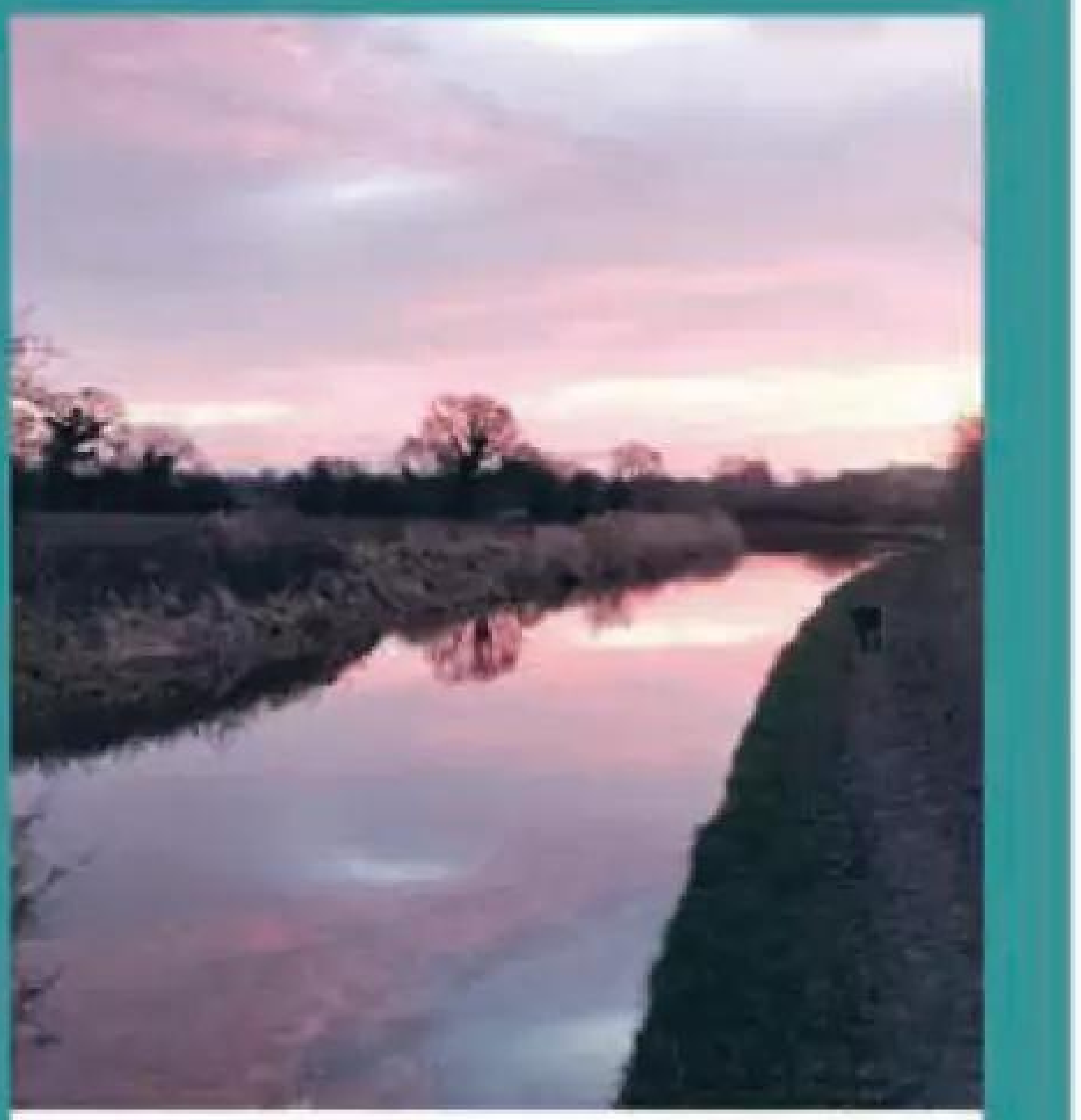
CRUISE GUIDE

A look at various canals across the country



SECONDHAND BOATS

Wide or narrow, long or short we have one to suit all budgets



THE BIG PICTURE

Your photograph could win a set of Nicholson Waterways Guides

SUBSCRIBE

SIGN UP AND SAVE OVER £44*

CanalBoat
March 2025 £4.99 canalboat.co.uk
For everyone who enjoys the waterways
WIN A HOLIDAY WORTH £2000
BOAT TEST
FLOW DOWN BY AINTREE
Try a used boat first then commission your own
HOLIDAY SPECIAL
YOUR GUIDE TO WHERE TO GO IN 2025
CRT CHIEF RICHARD PARRY TO STAND DOWN
CRUISE GUIDE
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON CANAL
BOAT RESTORATION
LIVEABOARD
READERS' PHOTOGRA
TRIBUTE – PART 1
THE WEST IS SILENT
Tim Coghlan's tribute to actor Timothy West CBE
MARINA VISIT
SHARDLOW MARINA
On the River Trent and to the Trent & Mersey

PAY JUST £3.99 PER ISSUE

JOIN US AND ENJOY THESE GREAT BENEFITS:

PAY JUST £3.99 AN ISSUE

SAVE UP TO 48%* ON THE FULL PRICE

EACH ISSUE DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO YOUR DOOR

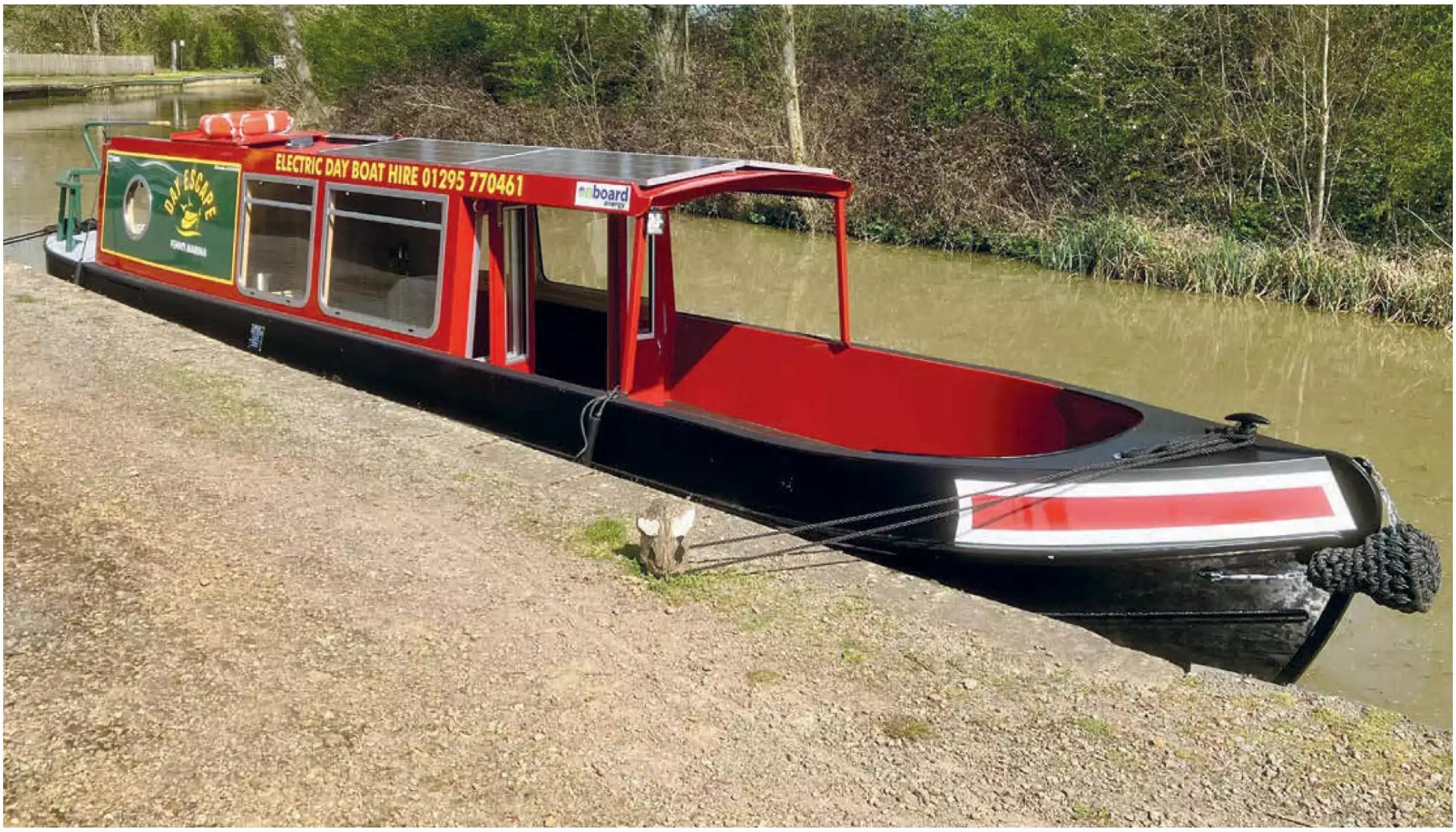
NEVER MISS AN ISSUE

RECEIVE OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER**

EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

ONLINE AT SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CB25PGA
CALL 01959 543747 AND QUOTE CB25PGA
COMPLETE THE FREEPOST POSTAL COUPON
SCAN THE QR CODE

ELECTRIC DAY BOAT AT FENNY MARINA...



An all-new electric day boat named Day Escape, is being run from Fenny Marina. The day boat is the first of many hire boats Crafted boats plan to run from their new marina on the south Oxford canal.

Crafted Boats has partnered with ABC Leisure Group to promote the day boat through the ABC Group. This is boat the 700th boat Crafted Boats have built.

The day boat is one of the first hire craft to have the all-new 6hp 5kw Barrus e-drive electric motor.

The boat is equipped with 16 lead-carbon batteries totalling 44KW of storage, it has fitted 1.1KW of solar and a Victron 5kw inverter/ charger.

The boat has everything you need for the day, kettle, fridge, microwave, toilet, heating, indoor and outdoor seating,

Anyone looking to hire the day boat will get full training on the day and it's the perfect opportunity to get on the canal for up to 10 people.

One of the route the hire can take is to head north from the marina to Marston Doles stop for lunch then head back, the trip should take five and a half hours to six hours

Crafted Boats Ltd.

...ELECTRIKA 2025

Organised by Ortomarine in partnership with Aquavista Brinklow Waterside & Marina, Cathiron Lane, Rugby, CV23 0JH Over the last few years a near silent revolution has been taking place, as a new generation of electric propelled, hybrid narrowboats have been launched on UK waterways. Adoption has been slowly gathering momentum, but finding good information is difficult, even at national boat shows. Electrika aims to provide a meeting point for early adopters, manufacturers and potential new owners to share information and real-life experience of this exciting new technology.

With everyone from Electrika 2024 returning and 14 new exhibitors and 10 showboats, the show has really stepped up a gear. The event should provide attendees with a comprehensive selection of boatbuilders, engines and equipment suppliers/ manufacturers, all with an electric hybrid theme.

In addition to the exhibition, attendees will be able to experience first-hand, the joy of silent cruising as ABC Leisure Group will be running trips on one of their all-electric day boats. A full program of talks has been arranged and there will be many existing electric narrowboat owners at the show to provide first-hand experience of electric boating. Camping will be available for tents and motorhomes (not suitable for caravans) and there will be live entertainment and a bar after the show each night.

For a full list of exhibitors and to book tickets, visit https://electrika.uk/

The first Rolec fast charger post (Photo Adam Porter)

Electrika 2024 (Photo Adam Porter)

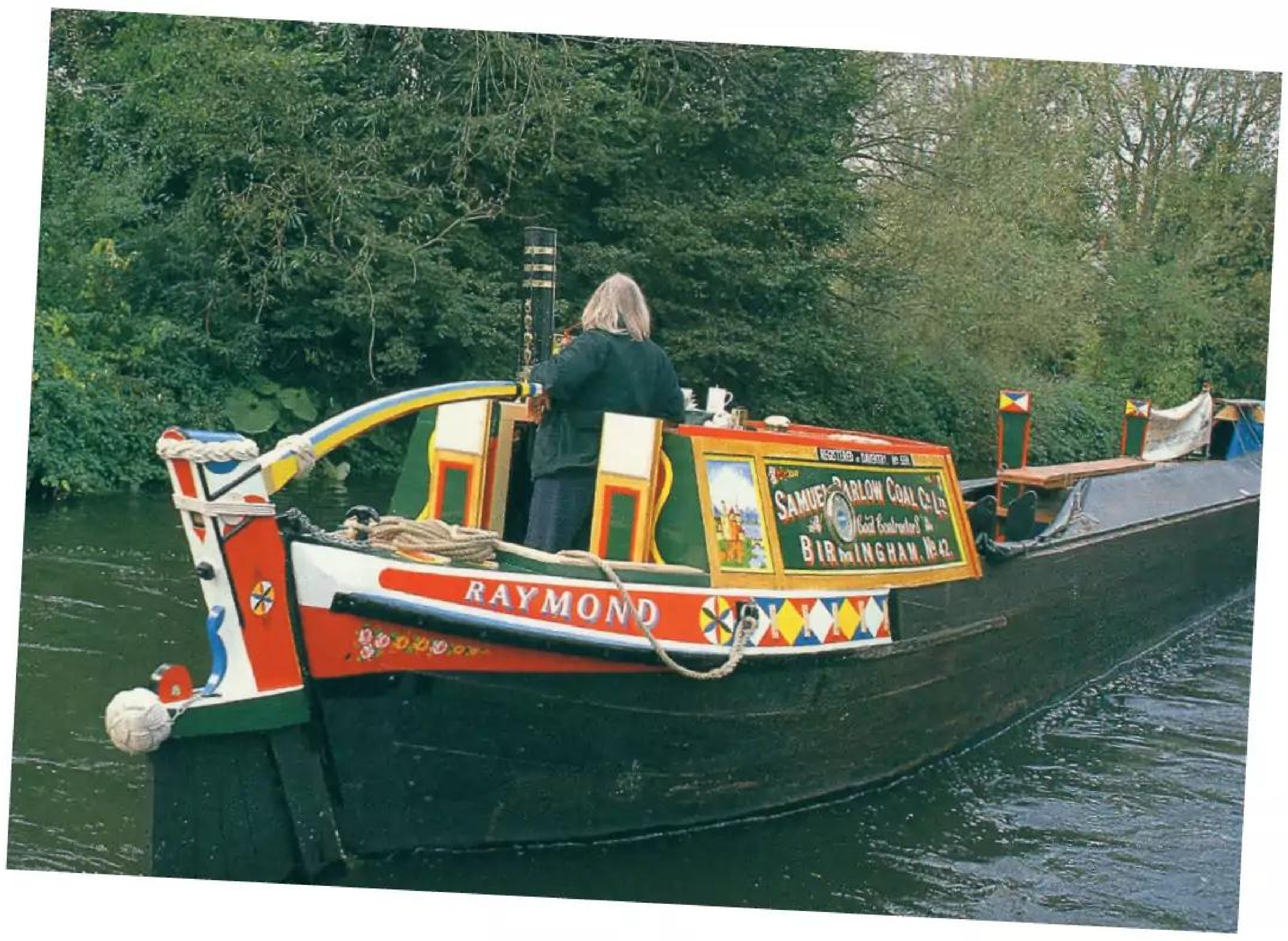
POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST

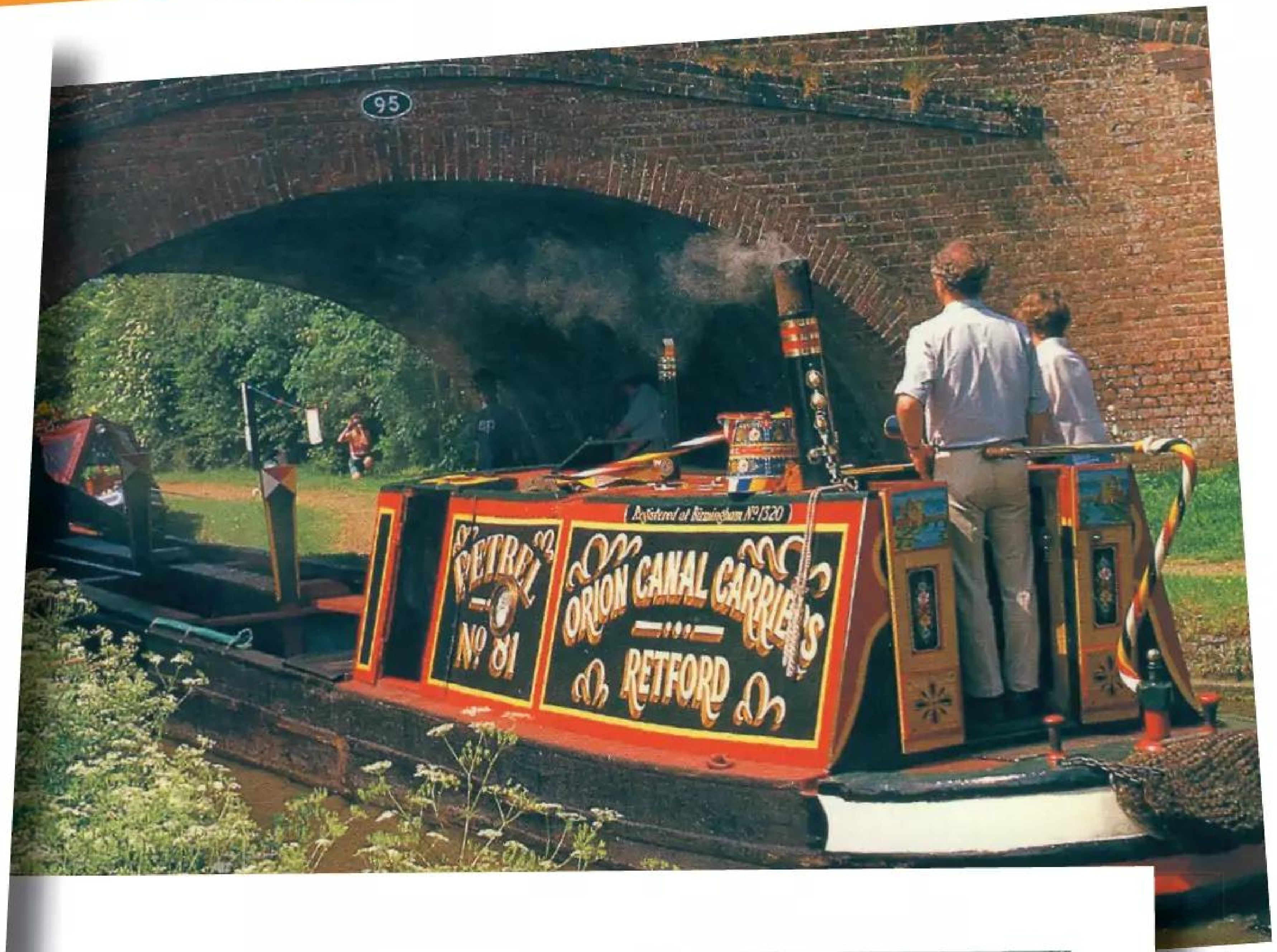
After having had the winning bid for some items advertised on a well-known online action, I was pleased to see among them were these three postcards. They were presented with Canal Boat & Inland Waterways (as our magazine was then titled) back in 2003.

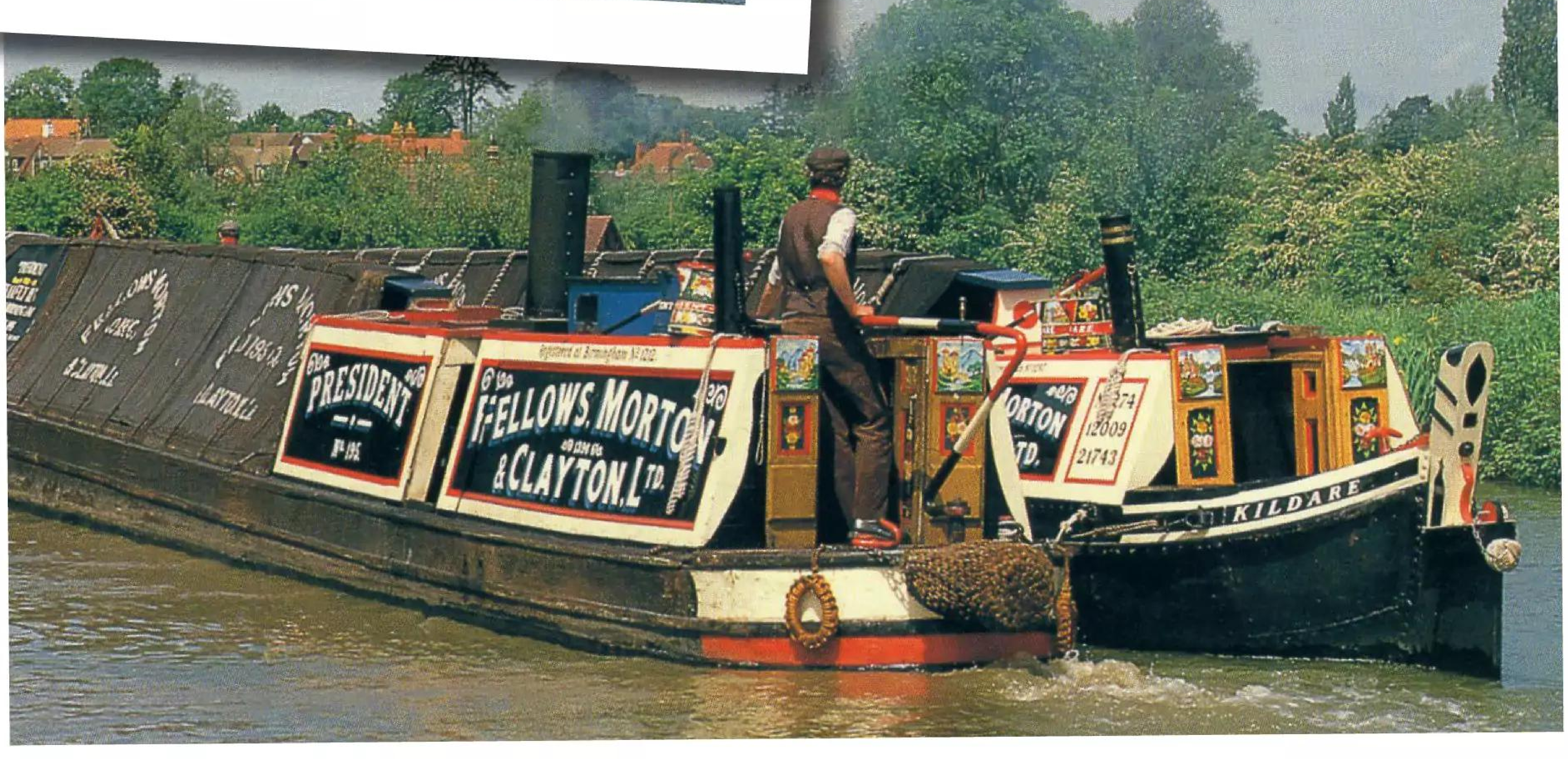
Raymond was launched at Braunston in 1958 (a good year, my birth year. Ed). It is an unpowered butty and believed to be the last wooden working narrowboat ever built. She has been extensively rebuilt to the original design. Seen here in 2002.

Petrel seen at Braunston in Northamptonshire, the scene of many a working narrowboat, is heading south on the Oxford Canal in 1997.

President was one of 31 steam-powered boats operated by renowned canal carriers Fellows, Morton & Clayton was built in 1909. President has been restored and is owned by the Black Country Living Museum. If any of our readers would like the three postcards to complete their collection, just drop me an email. Ed


RAYMOND
SAMUEL BARLOW COAL Co Ltd
BIRMINGHAM


95
PETREL
No 81
ORION CANAL CARRIERS
RETFORD


PRESIDENT
FELLOWS, MORTON & CLAYTON, LTD.
KILDARE

CRICK SHOW: HOODS, HYBRIDS AND HORROR...

Martin Ludgate gives his first impressions from the UK's only annual boat show dedicated to inland waterways craft, an event which this year featured a large proportion of 'pram hood' style narrowboats, some interesting electric and hybrid propulsion systems... and a prizewinning boat with a gothic horror theme!

We often find that there's a 'theme' to the boats at Crick Boat Show. A couple of years ago it was semi-cruiser stern narrowboats; before that it was semi-trad boats; go back a couple of decades and tug-style boats were all the rage. And 2025 at the UK's main inland waterways boat show seems to have been very much the year of the 'pram hood' narrowboat.

The majority of boats at this year's event at Crick, Northamptonshire on the Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal would suit boaters who wanted some protection from the elements with one of these canopy covers over the stern, whether it's a cruiser, semi-cruiser, semi-trad or trad style boat.

'Pram hoods' were popular this year

Contrasting front end treatments

And it's tempting to continue by saying "and this year's winning boat followed the trend..." as it did indeed have a hood fitted. But to suggest that the winner, as voted for by the show's visitors, of the coveted Favourite Boat award was in any way following any kind of fashion would be to completely fail to do justice to the remarkable Gothic fantasy that is narrow boat Vampirate...

Truly a unique boat, this 60ft semi trad from Norton Canes Boatbuilders is vampire and pirate themed throughout, from the spooky castles painted on the back doors to the headlight in the form of a skull with the beams blazing from its eyes. And the features in between include everything from a pirate's gun for a loo roll holder to a Milky Way sky design on the bedroom ceiling, while the fitout includes ebonised oak, cherry wood, Brazilian granite and metallic paintwork.

The runner up this year was Braidbar's boat Daisy No 213, a 67ft hybrid drive semi-trad narrowboat with traditional styling on the outside but plenty of modern features inside. And in third place were Ovation Boats with their 61ft hybrid diesel electric cruiser stern narrowboat Breaking Bad.

And one boat that didn't win a prize but simply couldn't be ignored was 'the plastic narrowboat' - Adrift's electric powered 100 percent recyclable HDPE plastic hulled boat.

In all these descriptions of eye-catching narrowboats you might be wondering where all the widebeam boats were – and, to a certain extent, so were we. From the situation a few years back when it looked like wider craft were going to be in a majority before long, reaching the point where a separate category was created for boats over 7ft wide in the awards, their presence at Crick had shrunk back this year.

There were just two widebeam boats on show this time, from Collingwood Boatbuilders and Kingsground.

But Crick Boat Show isn't just about new boats – whether wide or narrow. An increasing feature in recent years has been second-hand boats, with the floating exhibits this year including a number from different brokerages.

And while it seems that almost all the new boats that we test in our regular monthly Canal Boat boat test features (particularly the more high-end bespoke craft) are fitted with some form of hybrid or electric power, when it comes to conversions of existing craft there has been a lot less take-up of new propulsion systems – with owners concerned about the costs of retro-fitting. So it was

Winners: Sarah Edgson of Norton Canes Boatbuilders (left) with the owners of the remarkable Vampirate which was voted Favourite Boat

A line-up of 'pram hood' sterns

Every detail of Vampirate follows the vampires and pirates theme

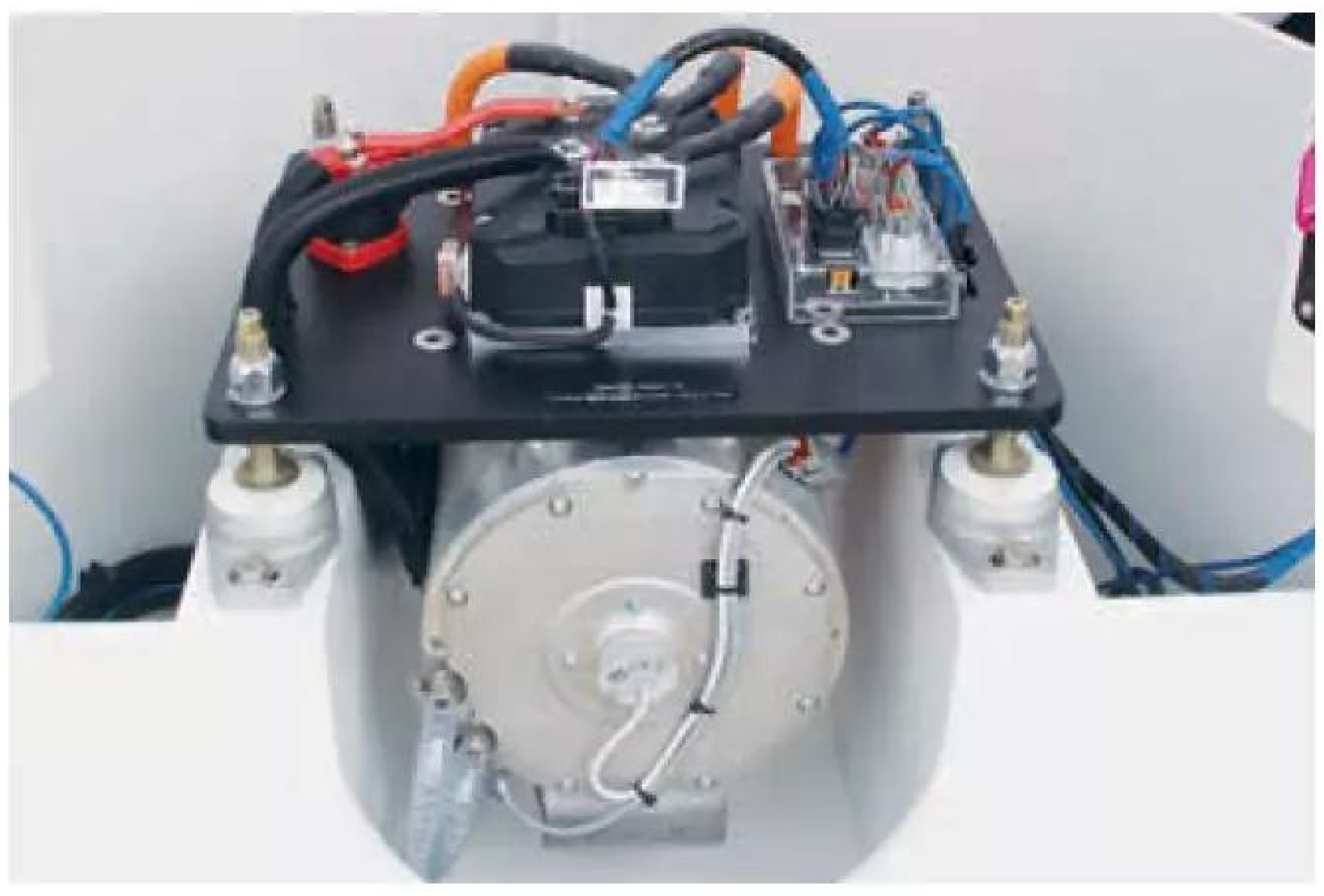
Red Snapper hybrid drive: the prototype in narrowboat Oliver has done 1200 miles and its owner is very satisfied with it

One of the few widebeams is attracting plenty of interest

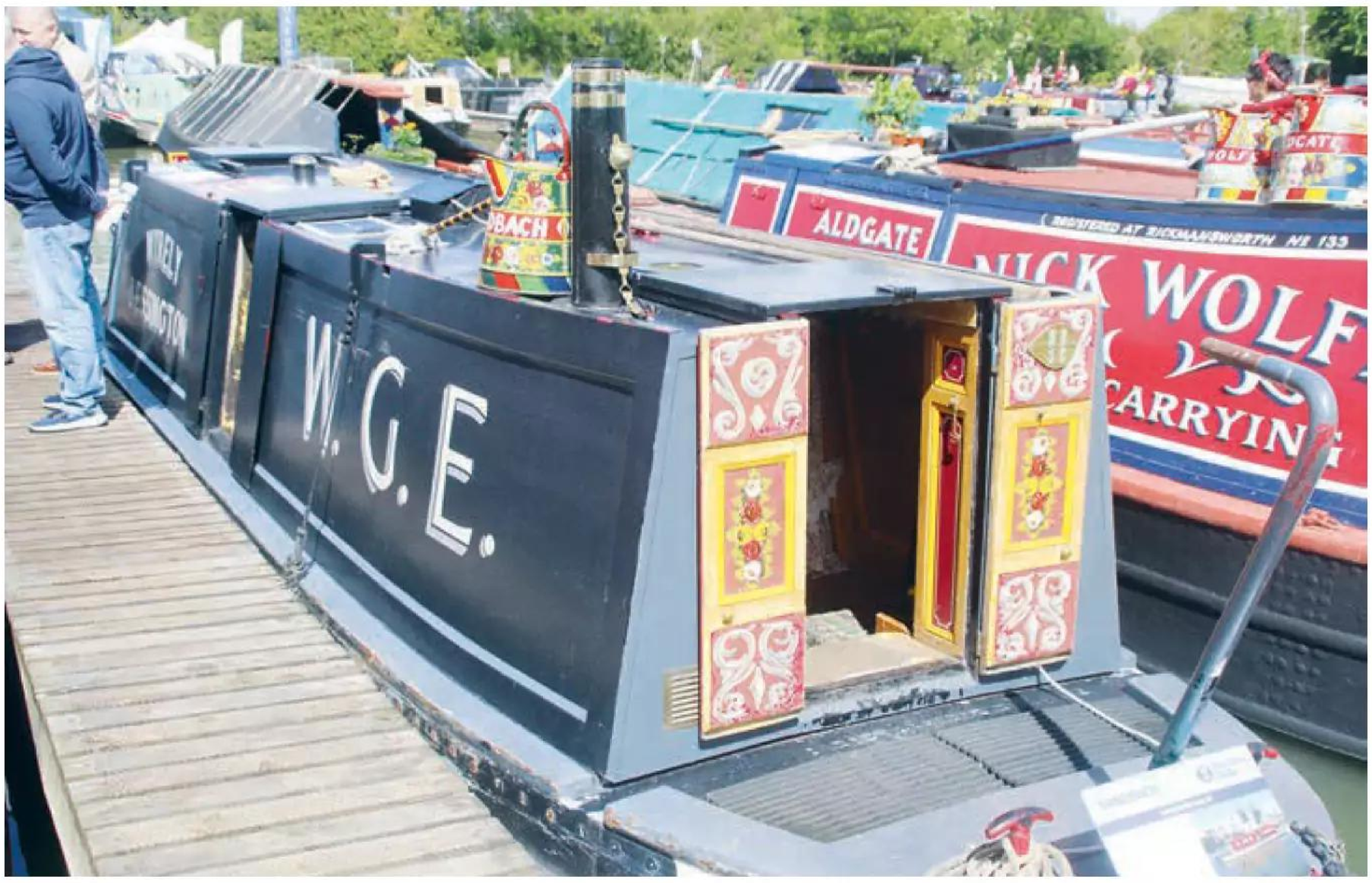
The striking lines of Adrift's plastic narrowboat

A good line-up of historic boats this year

Aficionados will be able to identify the Josher, GU and BW bow styles among the historic boats



Törkmar's hybrid installation, designed for 'drop in' fitting to new boats and conversions of existing craft



Historic tug Sandbach in its 'Peaky Blinders' paint scheme

interesting to see two exhibitors at Crick that had solutions on display for conversion of existing diesel powered boats to hybrid power.

The people involved in Mothership Marine, builder of electric boats, have now formed an offshoot Törkmar, an independent company that produces a 'drop-in' system for craft built by other builders, for conversions to existing diesel boats, and for upgrades of first generation electric installations – and they even suggest that with its high torque and suitability for matching with a large propeller, it could suit historic craft. Everything is designed to be easily installable without specialist skills, the circuitry is mounted on a back panel with the positions of all the components printed on it; the main propulsion motor slots in on its brackets; the control panel is a single unit.

And meanwhile on the Lynch Motors stand, the new Red Snapper hybrid propulsion system was on display – and over among the floating exhibits was narrowboat Oliver, fitted two years ago with the prototype Red Snapper system. Its enthusiastic owner was happy to testify that it was straightforward, affordable (Lynch put the basic price for motor, frame, controller and display at around £6,500), did the job, and had paid for itself in diesel saved.

All the main engine makers were there – and these days they all display hybrid solutions, not just straight diesels – as were stands offering everything a boater might need, from ropes and windlasses to insurance, moorings and boat finance.

And away from the serious business of buying and equipping your boat, there was plenty more to see – including a good turnout of historic boats on show. They included craft resplendent in the colours of the former Grand Union Canal Carrying Company, British Waterways, Fellows Morton & Clayton, and… Peaky Blinders? Yes, historic 1946 LMS Railway narrow beam tug Sandbach was back from a filming assignment and still in the special livery used.

Meanwhile alongside the Canal & River Trust's museum boat Sculptor was another contrasting CRT craft: the latest new workboat with piling rig for working on waterway maintenance.

For those wanting to learn more about all aspects of boat ownership there were seminars on everything from designing a new boat to refitting and old one; masterclasses from exhibiting companies covering subjects including electric propulsion, heating, on-board wi-fi, insurance, hull protection, batteries and diesel cookers; and boat handling training. And CRT Chief Executive Richard Parry, in his final visit before he stands down in July (see news pages), having attended every Crick Show in his 12 years at the helm, answered the questions in a Q&A session which touched on the financial threat facing the waterways from falling Government funding, and the danger that some canals could ultimately end up permanently closed for lack of money. He said he "couldn't imagine anyone saying 'we're going to sit by and let it happen'," but equally regarded it as an inevitable final consequence if no further cash can be found - "you can't run the system on thin air" – and saw a need to "break" the widespread general belief that "the canals will always be there", whatever happens. And out in the festival, the campaign for the waterways wasn't forgotten, with the Inland Waterways Association's stand and a Fund Britain's Waterways display making people aware of the issue.

And then there was the lighter side to the show: plenty of art and craft stalls, a food court and an entertainments marquee with a whole programme of music all weekend on a stage at one end, and a bar and real ale festival at the other end. Boat trips out onto the Grand Union Leicester Line were popular, and the ice cream vans did good business especially on the fine and sunny Sunday of the otherwise rather mixed Bank Holiday weekend.

We'll be bringing you a full report of the boats on show in our next two issues; meanwhile enjoy the hot-off-the-press pictures on these pages of another successful Crick Boat Show. CB

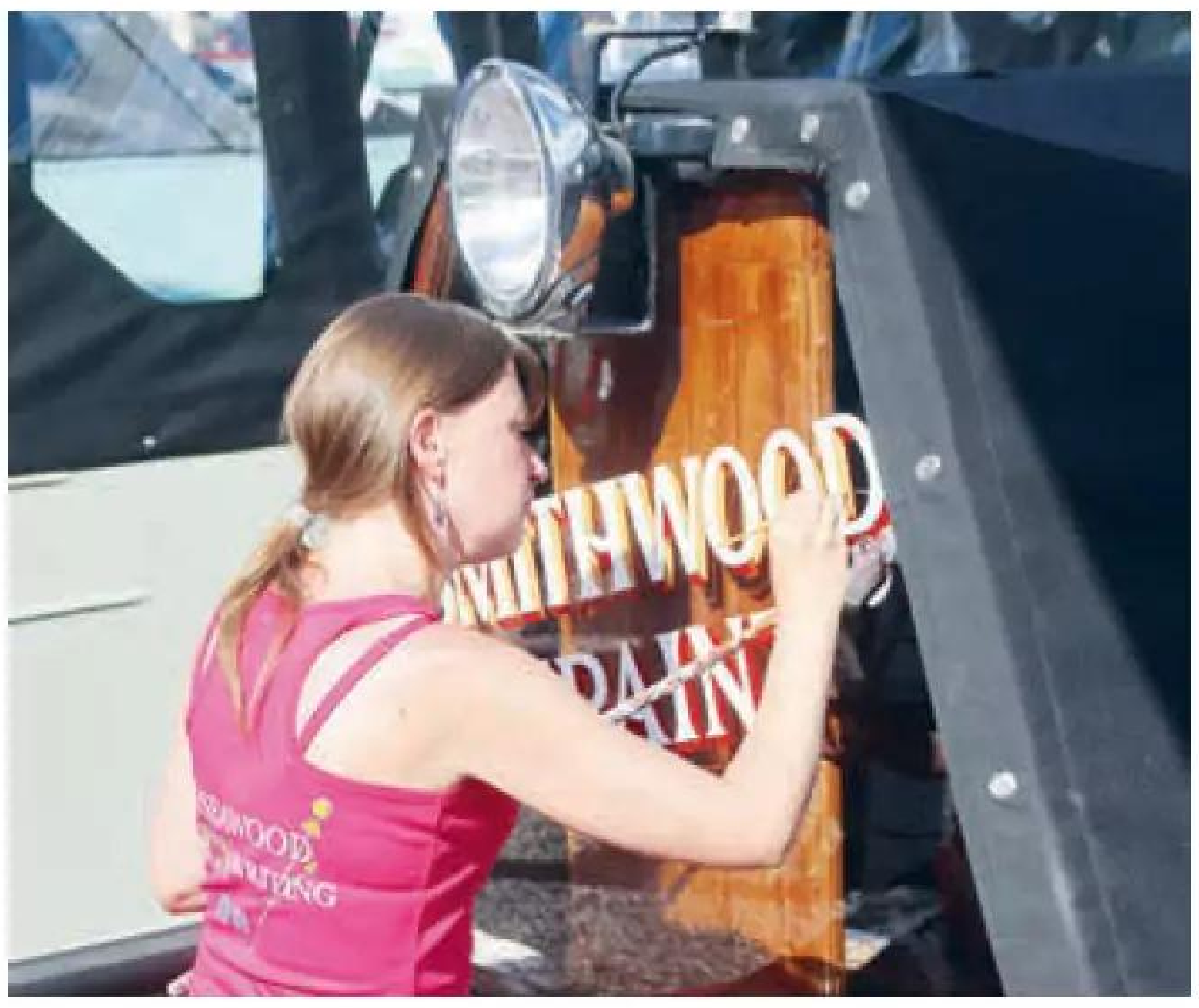
The Canal & River Trust's latest workboat contrasts with its narrowboat Sculptor, based Stoke Bruerne museum

Many visitors came by boat and moored on the adjacent Grand Union Leicester Line

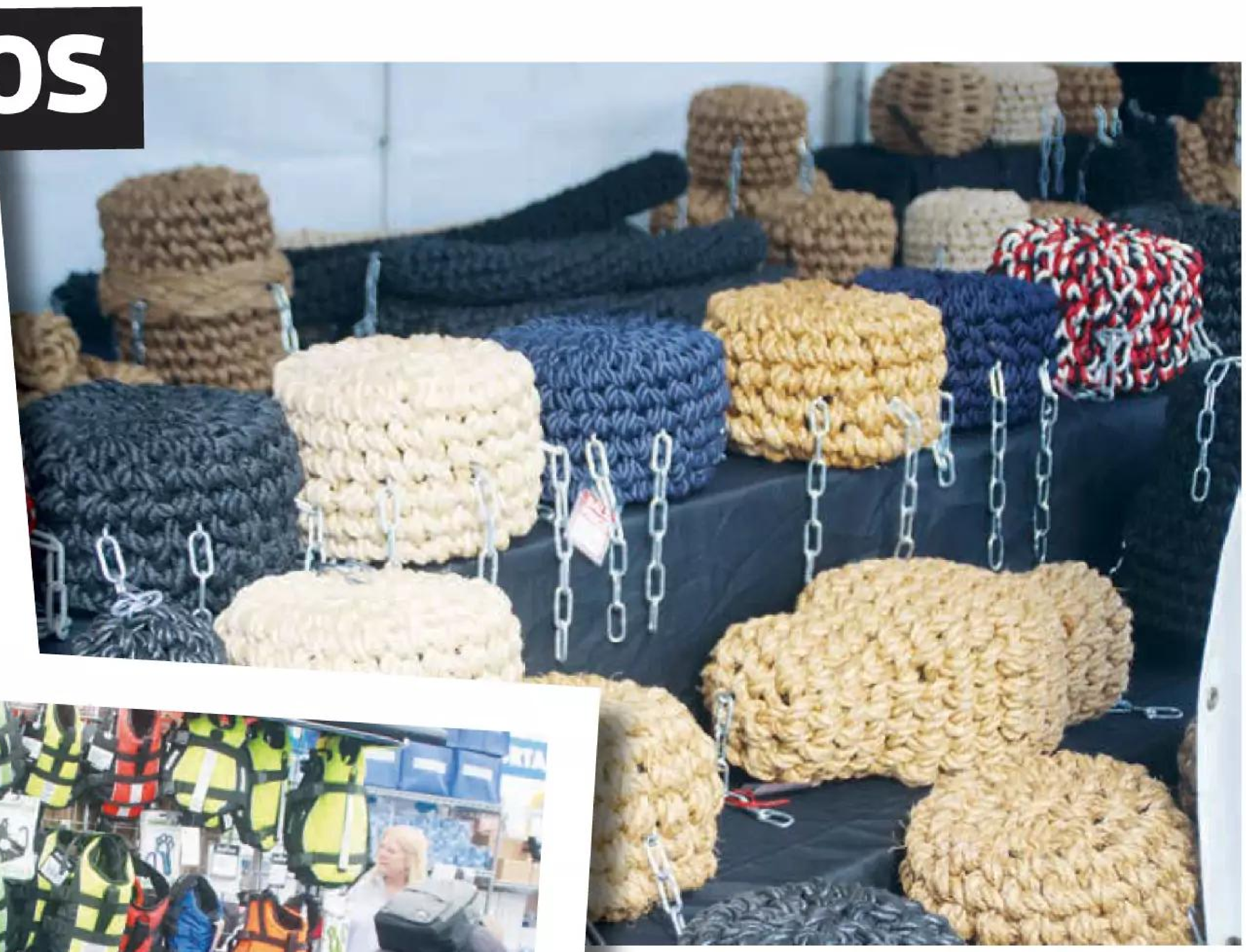
Flying the flag for the waterway funding campaign

The Canal & River Trust demonstrate how a lock works to a young visitor

Public boat trips operated all weekend


A mahlstick and a steady hand

CRICK IN PHOTOS



RE 100
EXPLORE 10

STOP PRESS: LYMM CAMPAIGN EVENT

As we went to press it had just been confirmed that another event has been added to this already busy summer on the waterways. A campaign rally of boats, led by the Inland Waterways Association, is planned for the August Bank Holiday weekend 23-25 August at Lymm, Cheshire, to draw attention to the ongoing nearby closure of the Bridgewater Canal following a major breach on New Year's Day 2025, and to the need to fund and carry out repairs to get the canal open again. All boaters, campers and traders are welcome to attend. There will be more details in our August issue, and in the meantime booking details should be available on the IWA website waterways.org.uk by the time this appears in print.

BOATING LEISURE SERVICES

OUTSTANDING MARINE REPAIR BUSINESS BASED AT HEYFORD FIELDS MARINA

Boating Leisure Services is based at bridge 34 of the Grand Union. Established in 1998 Boating Leisure Services which is ran by Gary Manning & Dave Flower has been providing an excellent service to boaters carrying out mechanical and electrical repairs and service. We are Eberspacher accredited dealers, Victron trained installers and much more. We can offer a superior blacking service and full boat yard facilities including fuel polishing and carpentry work.

HEYFORD FIELDS NARROWBOATS

ENQUIRE ABOUT BUILD SLOTS

THE BOAT BUILDING DIVISION OF BOATING LEISURE SERVICES

Designer and builder of bespoke Narrowboats and Widebeams.
We can also offer a range of bespoke sailaways.
Our Crick wins are proof that we can guarantee your boat will be built by the time served craftsmen

DAVE BISHOP NARROWBOAT REPAINTS IN SINGLE OR TWO PACK APPLICATION - 07767 277936

WORKSHOP FACILITIES
- BOAT BUILDING ☑
- BOAT BLACKING ☑
- ENGINE SERVICING ☑
- DIESEL HEATING ☑
- CARPENTRY AND REFITS ☑

Four times winner of Favourite Boat at Crick Boat Show. We apply the same level of expert craftsmanship to our workshop repairs and services.

Tel: 01604 833 599 | Mob: 07970 746156
Email: bls@boatingleisureservices.com
www.boatingleisureservices.com
Boating Leisure Services, Heyford Fields Marina,
Bugbrooke Rd, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire NN7 3NP

AGENTS FOR Eberspächer

BRITISH MARINE

At the Heart of England's Waterways

BRAUNSTON BROKERAGE

Telephone: **01788 891373**
Website: **www.braunstonmarina.co.uk**
Email: sales@braunstonmarina.co.uk
Fax: 01788 891436
Braunston Marina Limited, Braunston,
Nr Daventry, Northants NN11 7JH

BARNABY
40ft/12,2m, Trad Style, 1986, Hull by Stowehill Marine, Fit Out Stowehill, 2/4 Berth
£21,500

NB CUT DIAMOND
45ft /13.72m Trad 1987, Hull by Colecraft, Fit Out by Colecraft, 2/4 Berth
£29,950

UNDER OFFER

NB ZION
40ft /12.2m Cruiser 1977, Hull by Hancock and Lane, 2/4 Berth
£31,950

UNDER OFFER

NB TEAL
72ft/22m, Traditional Style, 1991, Hull & Fit Out by Pat Buckle, 6/10 Berth
£39,950

NB MISTRAL
60ft/18,29m, Semi Trad Style, 1995, Hull & Fit Out by Colecraft, 2/5 Berth
£51,950

UNDER OFFER

NB LIFE IN SLOW MOTION
57'9"/16,6m, Trad Stern, 2004, Hull by John White, Fit Out by Stirling Boats, 2/5 Berths
£51,950

NB ALEXANDRA NO 4
£54,950. 60ft/18,29m, Trad Style, 1999, Hull & Fit Out by Sirius, 2/4 Berth
£54,950

CLAIRE LOUISE
70ft/21,34m, Trad Stern, 1993, Hull & Fit Out by Steve Priest, 5/7 Berth
£52,000

EASTWOOD
57'6"/17,5m, Trad Stern, 2015, Hull by Tim Tyler, Fit Out by Stoke Boats, 2/4 Berths
£87,500

12-PAGE PULL-OUT

CRUISE **GUIDE**

YOUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WATERWAYS AROUND THE UK
easy-to-follow map ● information for boaters ● top ten pubs

RIVERS LEE AND STORT

It's well worth the journey from the rest of the waterways network through London to explore these two attractive rivers on the borders of Hertfordshire and Essex

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **MARTIN LUDGATE**

Attractive surroundings to Hunsdon Mill Lock on the Stort

10 WATERSIDE PUBS

1 **Crate Brewery & Pizzeria** Hackney Wick. 020 8533 3331. Waterside by Bridge 11. Craft brewery, tap room bar and pizza restaurant serving their own brews plus over 50 other bottled beers. Waterside outdoor seating, music at weekends.

2 **Princess of Wales** Lea Bridge. 020 8533 3463. By Bridge 18. Smart, large pub broken up into smaller areas, with real ale, food (seasonal British classics), waterside seating

3 **Anchor & Hope** Clapton. 020 8806 1730. Between bridges 19 and 20. Small, cosy, recently refurbished traditional riverside pub with open fire, wood panelling, dart board. Real ale, waterside seating. No food but Jamaican food truck nearby, takeaways can be ordered to deliver to pub

4 **Greyhound** Enfield Lock. 01992 711271. Waterside north of the lock. Popular locals' pub with McMullen's local real ales, outdoor seating with waterside view

5 **Fish & Eels** Hoddesdon. 01992 466073. By Bridge 55. Popular modernised 200-year-old riverside inn, with real ale, emphasis on food (pub classics, Sunday roasts, pizzas, brunch from 9am), riverside garden and covered patio

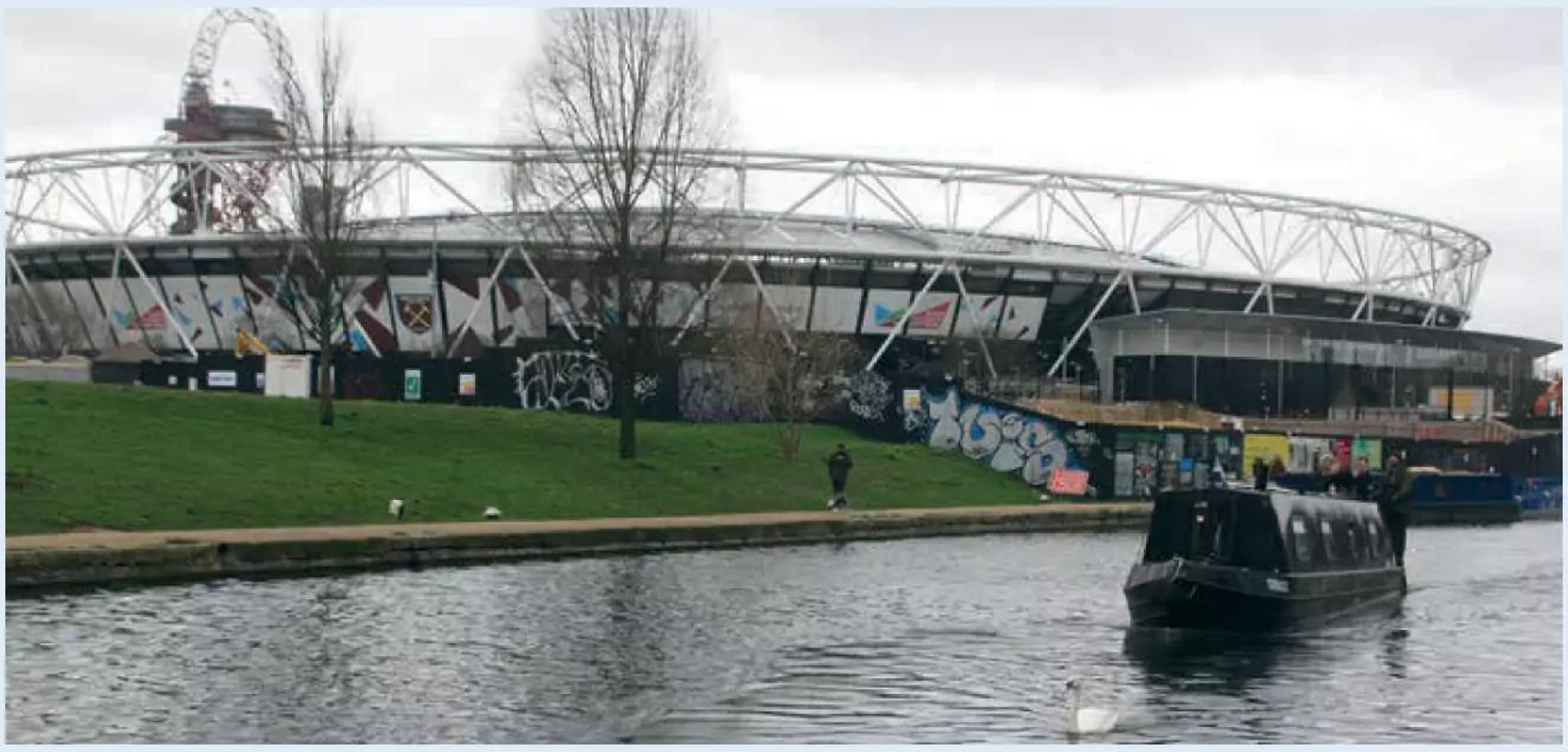
6 **Jolly Fisherman** St Margarets. 01920 870125. By Bridge 59. Popular pub with local McMullen's real ales, food (extensive menu including pub classics, burgers, grills, roasts, children's meals), garden

7 **Old Barge** Hertford. 01992 581871. By Bridge 74. Well-known traditional waterside pub with real ale, garden, food (pub favourites, burgers, children's menu), occasional live music

8 **New Inn** High Street, Roydon. 01279 792225. 5 mins southeast of Bridge 6. Traditional 250-year-old friendly village country pub, popular with locals. Real ale, food (pub favourites, burgers, steaks, pasta), large garden. Closed Mon

9 **Moorhen** Harlow. 01279 423066. By Burnt Mill Lock. Large family-friendly Greene King chain pub with affordable food (pub classics, burgers, weekday lunchtime and afternoon offers, children's menu), riverside garden

10 **Castle** Castle Street, Bishop's Stortford. 01279 652578. 5 mins west of Bridge 52 and left into Castle St. Traditional back street town local with public bar and snug, range of real ale including local brews. Closed weekday lunchtimes.



The lower Lee in the shadow of the former Olympic stadium in east London now home to West Ham United

The River Lee and its tributary the River Stort are rather 'out on a limb' when viewed from most of the national waterways system, with a journey through London necessary to reach them. In fact, I've even heard them referred to by local boaters as "the tail end" or some similar expression – not disparagingly, but just a reference to them being at the end of a lengthy journey for some. And that's a real shame if it puts boaters off visiting, because they're two historic rivers with some very attractive lengths as they reach out into rural Hertfordshire and its border with the relatively little-known but pleasant North Essex. And even in the urban reaches further south, the lower Lee has attractions and fascinations of its own as it reaches through east and northeast London.

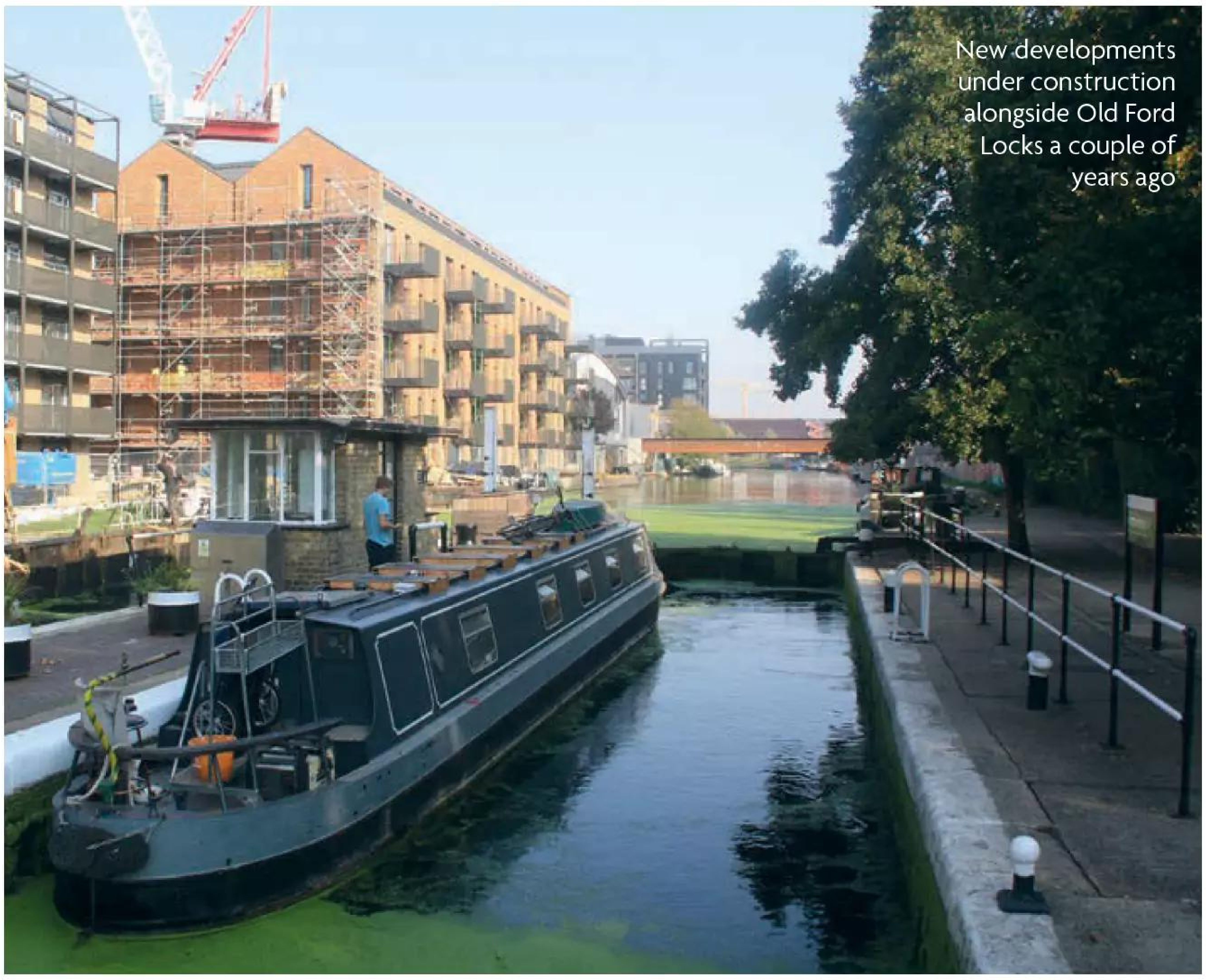
But as mentioned above, getting there does involve a passage through London. And this can be achieved by more than one route. Most boaters will have arrived via the Grand Union Canal's Paddington Arm and the Regents Canal through central London. They will then join the Lee via one of two short link canals, both of which we've described in our 'Cruise

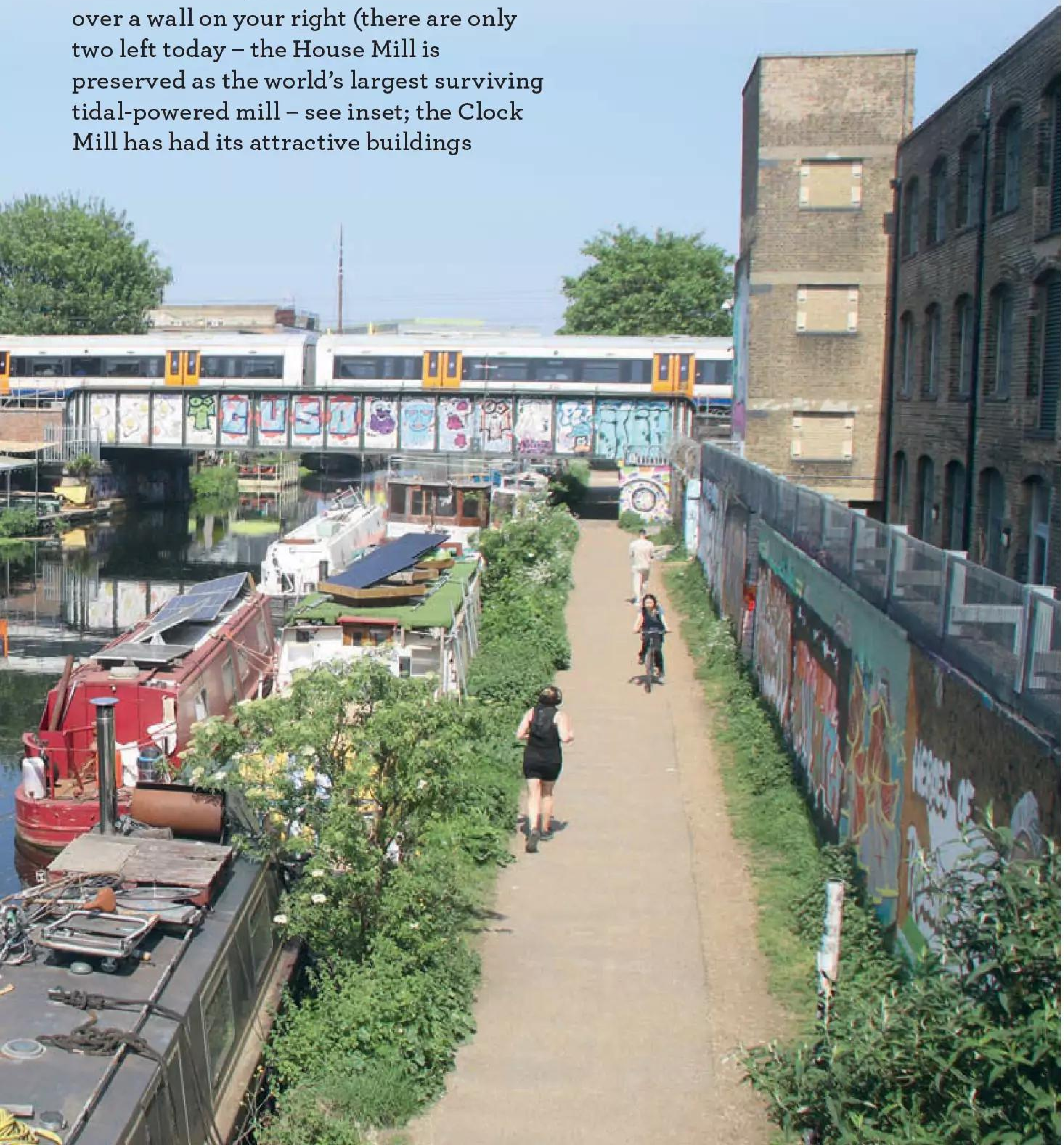
Guide Extra' on the following pages: one is the Limehouse Cut, leading north eastwards from Limehouse Basin (where it connects to the Regent's Canal) to meet the start of the Lee Navigation 'proper' at Bow. And the other is the Hertford Union Canal, which provides a short cut leaving the Regent's Canal by Victoria Park and meeting the Lee Navigation a mile or so further north above Old Ford Locks. It's a shorter route, but misses out on a couple of interesting features – see below.

Adventurous boaters (with the appropriate experience and suitably equipped craft) can arrive at Limehouse via the tidal Thames through central London; while a final route, of most use to those coming up from the lower Thames tideway in seagoing boats, is provided by Bow Creek, which forms the tidal lower reaches of the Lee and connects to the Lee Navigation via Bow Locks.

Having arrived on the Lee via one of these routes, you will head northwards through East London – and as mentioned above, those who have come via the Limehouse Cut will get a chance to see a few sites that those arriving via the Hertford Union will miss. First, there are the Three Mills, on a tidal channel visible over a wall on your right (there are only two left today – the House Mill is preserved as the world's largest surviving tidal-powered mill – see inset; the Clock Mill has had its attractive buildings including a clock tower converted to office use). Next, having passed under the cavernous Bow Bridge (a concrete tunnel under a main road intersection) the waterway reaches a junction. Continue straight on for the main route, or bear right to make a circuit of part of the Bow Back Rivers, a system of former tidal creeks, mill streams and canals, which had fallen into near dereliction but have been revived, most recently as part of the Queen Elizabeth II Olympic Park. They pass right alongside the Orbit Tower and the main Olympic stadium, now West Ham United's football ground. On your way round this circuit, you'll also see two locks leading off to the right – the conventional City Mill Lock, and the unusual radial guillotine gated Carpenter's Road Lock. A further circuit via these two locks is navigable if appropriate notice is given to the Canal & River Trust.

The main Bow Back Rivers circuit returns to join the main Lee Navigation at a sharp right turn just below Old Ford Locks (not to be confused with the lock of a similar name on the Regent's Canal). These paired locks were converted to powered operation (as were most locks on the lower parts of the Lee) around 1960, when this was still a busy commercial river with tugs hauling strings of lighters carrying timber, grain, metal and other cargoes. The trade died out around the 1980s but power operation was retained, converted from keeper-operation to


New developments under construction alongside Old Ford Locks a couple of years ago


Formerly ex-industrial and seeing little boat traffic, the area around Hackney Wick is now a lively place

boater operation using a CRT 'watermate' (sanitary station) key. They're rather larger than typical broad beam locks, taking craft up to about 85ft by 18ft – although since the demise of freight traffic you're unlikely to meet anything that size.

Although you're on a river navigation (and as with all such waterways you should be aware of the possibility of currents and rising water levels after heavy rain), for the next few miles there's little sign of this, as the waterway follows largely artificial channels, created, extended, modified and enlarged at various dates since mediaeval times, with most of the river's flow carried by a series of unnavigable watercourses to the east. The section leading north from Old Ford towards Lea Bridge Road was built as the Hackney Cut Navigation in the 18th Century, and enlarged 100 years later.

Observant readers may have noticed the difference in spelling between my mention of Lea Bridge Road, and of the River Lee Navigation. So, which is right? Well, the river's name has been spelt in both ways interchangeably (and historically also 'Ley') over the years (and the name Lea Bridge Road reflects this), but legally the waterway is the Lee Navigation, so I've generally stuck with that.

A couple of decades ago this was a rather quiet waterway running through some at times run-down industrial areas with no freight traffic and few leisure boats, but now it's home to a great number of liveaboard craft, and lively businesses have sprung up on the banks including a couple of craft beer breweries with tap-rooms around the junction where the Herford Union Canal enters, bringing with it those boaters who have chosen to take the shorter route from the Regent's Canal. The number of moored craft may make it difficult to find space to stop; the accepted practice locally is to moor breasted-up alongside other craft, but do be sure not to obstruct the channel – especially as it's not just used by inland waterways craft but competitive rowing teams too.

Heading north past Hackney, Tottenham and Edmonton, the navigation forms a barrier between the marshes, wetlands, many football pitches and reservoirs of the Lee Valley on the east side, and to the left the industrial outskirts of London, with a few old cranes surviving as a reminder of when the industries relied on the river for transport. The Lee Valley Leisure

Old industries have given way to new developments and moored boats in north east London

Stonebridge Locks, Tottenham, are paired and power operated, like most lower Lee locks

MUST SEE

THE HOUSE MILL

Set in a formerly heavily industrial area just north of Bow Locks, the House Mill, a Grade 1 listed 18th century building, is a survivor of a number of water mills which were operated by tidal power. Its machinery is still in place, and it is open for tours at 11.30am, 1.30pm and 3pm every Sunday from May to December.

Taking the turn from the Lee onto the River Stort at Feilde's Weir

Above Enfield Lock: the houses on the left were built for workers at the Royal Small Arms Factory

A more rural reach attracting an assortment of small boats near Broxbourne

Attractive countryside and the chance of a mooring at a riverside pub above Broxbourne

Complex and the White Water Centre add a sporting element to the surroundings, while Enfield introduces another facet of the Lee Valley's history. The former Royal Small Arms Factory built the Lee-Enfield rifle, standard equipment during both world wars, while further north at Waltham Abbey were the Royal Gunpowder Mills, producing explosives for over 300 years and now open to the public as a museum on certain days (including surviving parts of its internal canal system).

Meanwhile locks continue at regular intervals, but as we get further towards the end of the built-up area the 1960s improvements for freight traffic come to an end, and we are back to manually operated single lock chambers, and to slightly smaller (but still generous) dimensions of around 85ft by 16ft. Many also feature cranked balance beams on the lower gates, while a few have hydraulic bottom gates: this is because there are often bridges over the lock tail which would get in the way of conventional balance beams; historically, this would not have been a problem as many lock gates on the Lee and Stort were pulled open and shut using ropes rather than beams (the last set at Rammey Marsh were rope-operated until 1995).

Beyond Waltham Abbey the east side of the valley is entirely rural, but to the west, Cheshunt and Broxbourne continue the built-up area. Broxbourne is quite a boating centre, with plenty of activity to be seen on the river from day hireboats to standup paddleboards. And the Lee finally takes on a more typically meandering, river-like route as it passes Carthagena, Dobbs Weir and Feilde's Weir locks. Immediately above the last of these, the Stort branches off (see below) while the Lee continues northwards on a broad, tree-lined course, before reaching the

Cruising past Stanstead Abbotts

twin villages of St Margaret's (on the west bank) and Stanstead Abbotts (on the east), with handy pubs, shops and boatyard. Stanstead Lock has a couple of quirks to look out for: firstly, it has a swingbridge across the chamber, which (for all but very short boats) needs to be opened before you open the top paddles when you're ascending, and before you enter the lock when descending. And secondly, the top gate paddles are quite fierce (and there are no ground paddles) so open them with care.

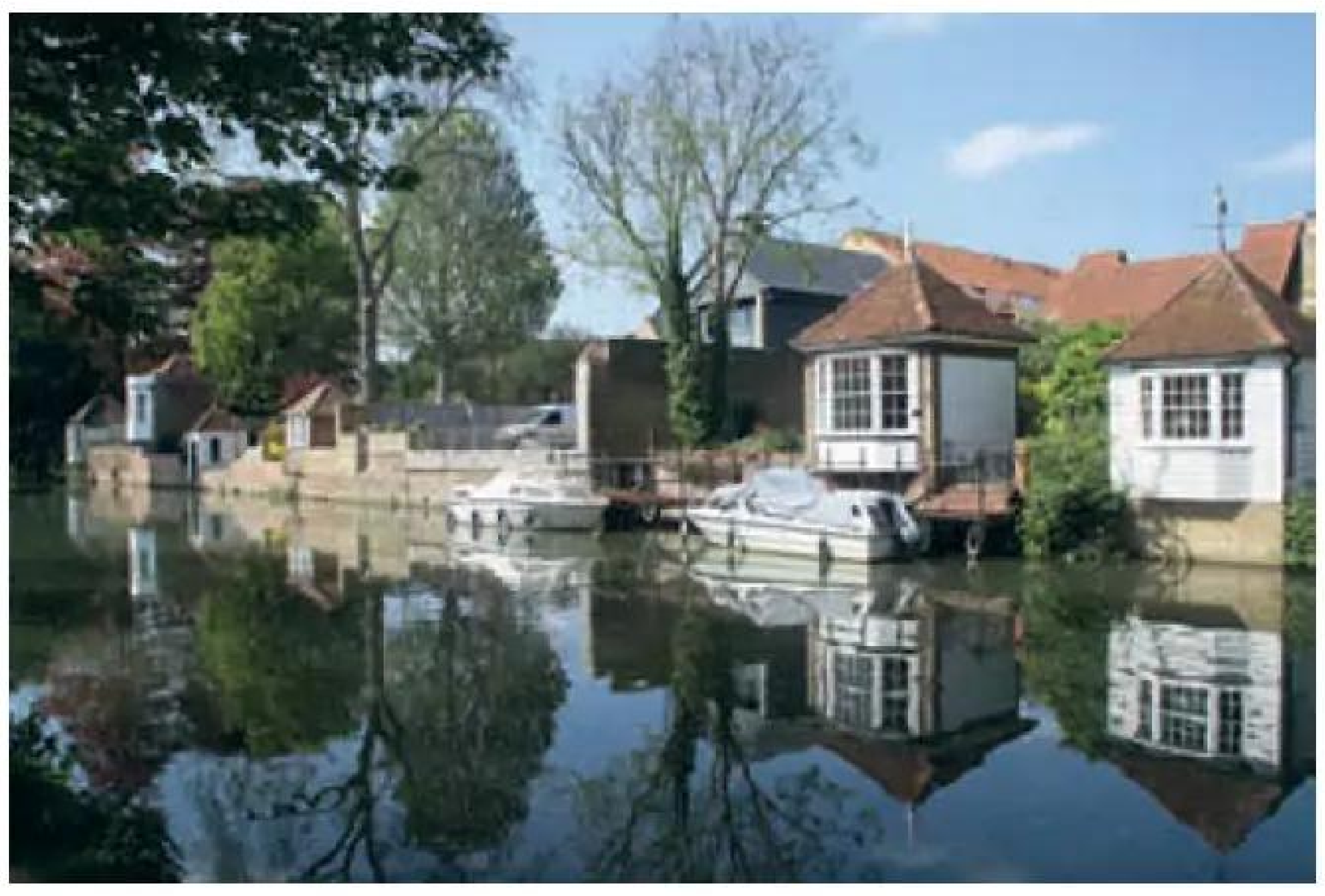
Ware is a pleasant town with an attractive riverside, made more so by its 'gazebos'. Originally known as 'Dutch summerhouses', these small 17th-19th century riverside buildings are thought to have been built by owners of high street properties to provide a quiet spot at the end of their gardens, away from the noise of the town. Having fallen into dereliction in the mid-20th century (when the riverside was under threat from a proposed service road) they were restored from the 1980s onwards.

Another quirk of Ware is the next lock: although this is a Canal & River Trust waterway, this lock is maintained by the Environment Agency (but don't worry, CRT licences are still valid). The reason for this is because the lock and its associated sluices control the water level in a reach of water which provides the supply to the head of the New River (see inset), a 400-year-old drinking water supply channel which still provides a contribution to London's domestic water supplies. About three quarters of a mile above the lock, you will pass the riverside valve house building where the water is taken from the river.

An attractive rural length of river leads to the final lock cut, and to Hertford Lock. This is the start of the Hertfordshire county town, with a mixture of modern developments on the left and a row of traditional buildings on the right leading to the waterside Old Barge Inn, recalling the river's former importance to the town. There are moorings near the pub, beyond which a small basin allows full-length boats to turn around. Shorter boats can proceed a little further before they need to turn back and return downstream. But don't just carry on back to London, because the River Stort awaits...

Starting at a slightly curious junction above Feilde's Weir Lock, where boats heading for the Stort will need to turn off and follow a channel running across the top of a set of weir sluices carrying the River Lee's flow, the Stort rapidly establishes itself has having a completely

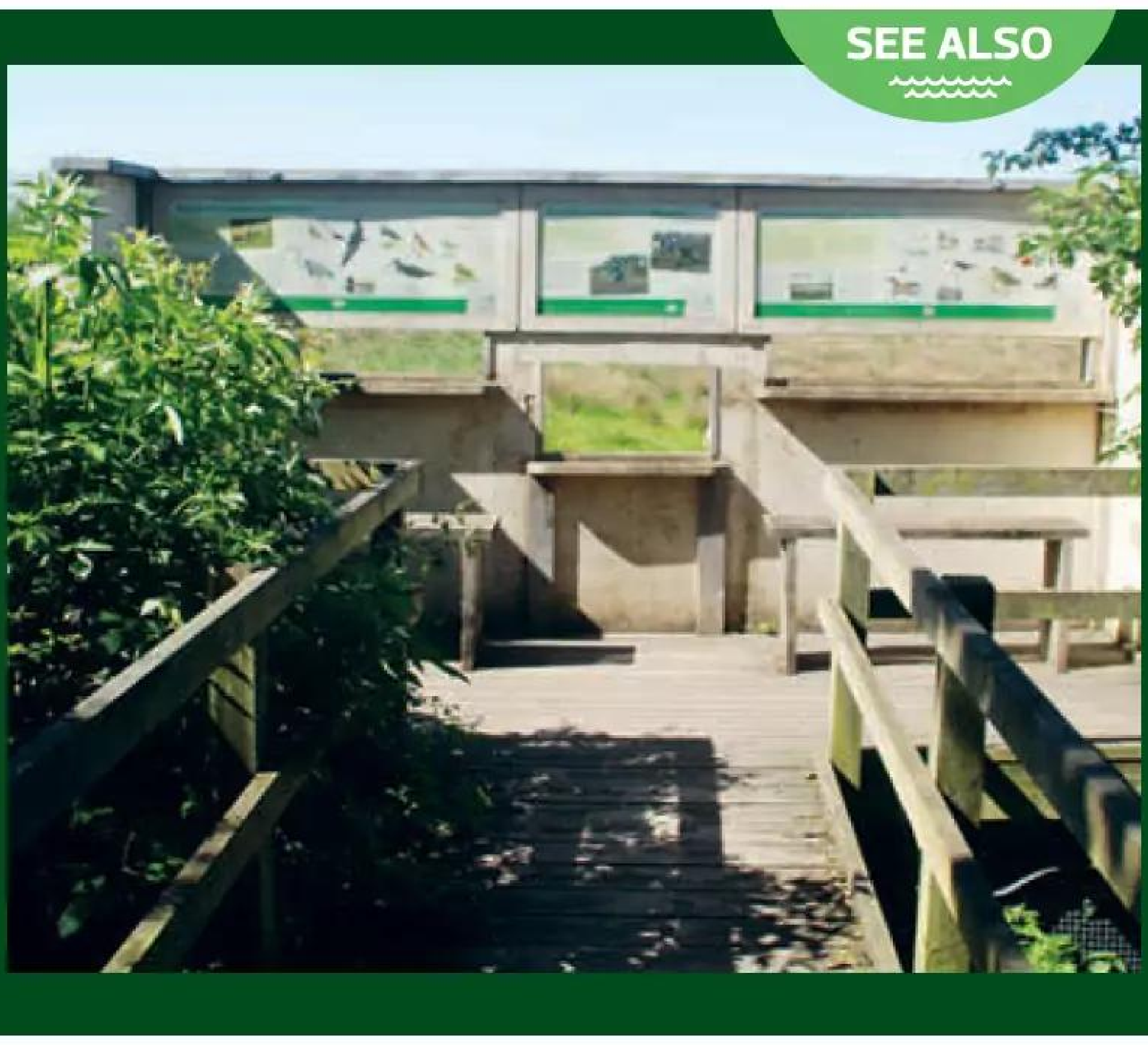
Both broad and narrow craft are common on both rivers, as seen near Ware



Some of the famous gazebos of Ware, summerhouses built 200 years ago

Paddleboarders enjoy the last stretch of the Lee before Hertford

SEE ALSO



HUNSDON MEAD NATURE RESERVE

A bird-watching 'hide' just off the towpath (pictured) provides access to this area of traditional 'Lammas land' (used for haymaking until Lammas – 1 August – then afterwards for grazing, then allowed to flood in winter) which is now also a wildlife reserve. There are rare orchids and ferns; visiting birds include the egret, sandpiper and lapwing in summer, and the wigeon, teal and snipe in winter

A winding reach of the Stort between Harlow and Sawbridgeworth

Traditional waterside pub and moorings near the head of navigation in Hertford

SEE ALSO

THE NEW RIVER WALK

Built over 400 years ago to provide London with drinking water, this early non-navigable water supply canal ran from Ware on the Lee all the way to Saddlers Wells in London. Still surviving and in use from a riverside valve house at Ware (pictured) to Stoke Newington, in recent years it has been opened up to the public as the 28-mile waymarked New River Walk, running along the waterside for the active length, and following the original route via nearby streets for the remainder

different character from the Lee. While the Lee varies between a broad channel with sweeping bends in its upper reaches, and long straight stretches of artificial channel at the London end, the Stort is a narrower and more winding route, sometimes requiring a little more concentration from steerers of craft which are closer to its maximum limits (and there are quite a mix of narrow and widebeam boats to be seen on the river).

Speaking of which, compared to the locks on the Lee which are rather more generous than the typical broad-beam canal, another difference on the Stort is that they are rather less generous. While still taking craft up to around 85ft long (which might be a challenge on some of the tighter bends!) their width limit is around 13ft 6in – yes, just too narrow for two narrowboats to share side-by-side. (Don't even think about trying it – I've seen the result!) In fairness, the last few times I've been on the river it's been so quiet that there wouldn't be many opportunities for sharing, nor many problems of queuing as a result of being unable to share.

The first of these locks, Lower Lock, is just a short way from the junction, and is soon followed by the second, Brick Lock. This may sound an odd name – after all, all the locks on the Stort are brick-built – but that wasn't always the case: until the early 20th Century when they were rebuilt by the Lee Conservancy who had recently taken over the Stort, 13 of the river's 15 locks were turf-sided timber structures; this lock and Harlow Lock being the exceptions.

While you're passing through, note the traditional lock keeper's cottage, with a plaque above the door showing a red hand emblem, the letters 'GD' and the date 1830: this was Sir George Duckett junior, proprietor of the river at that time. You might also be interested in a rather more recent sign indicating that honey, cider, fruit and vegetables are on sale.

Incidentally, between the two locks, a third lock branches off, leading into Roydon Marina – this rare example of a brand new lock having been built around

Paddleboarders enjoy the upper reaches above Sawbridgeworth

Passing an old maltings building in Sawbridgeworth

Leaving Spellbrook Lock on the Stort

10 years ago to provide access to moorings in what had been a gravel pit.

Above Brick Lock the navigation channel rejoins the river via a slightly odd junction, passing under a low bridge and bearing right to join a mill stream. It's straightforward when heading upriver, but on the way downstream it's easy to miss the turn under the low bridge and end up at a dead end at the former mill.

Moorings provide access to Roydon village, before the river passes under a low road bridge by Roydon Station, another low bridge under the railway (both the Lee and the Stort are well supplied with railway stations carrying frequent services to and from London,

Attractive tree-lined length of the Stort just south of Bishop's Stortford

handily for crew joining and leaving boats or for towpath walks), and winds its way out into the countryside again.

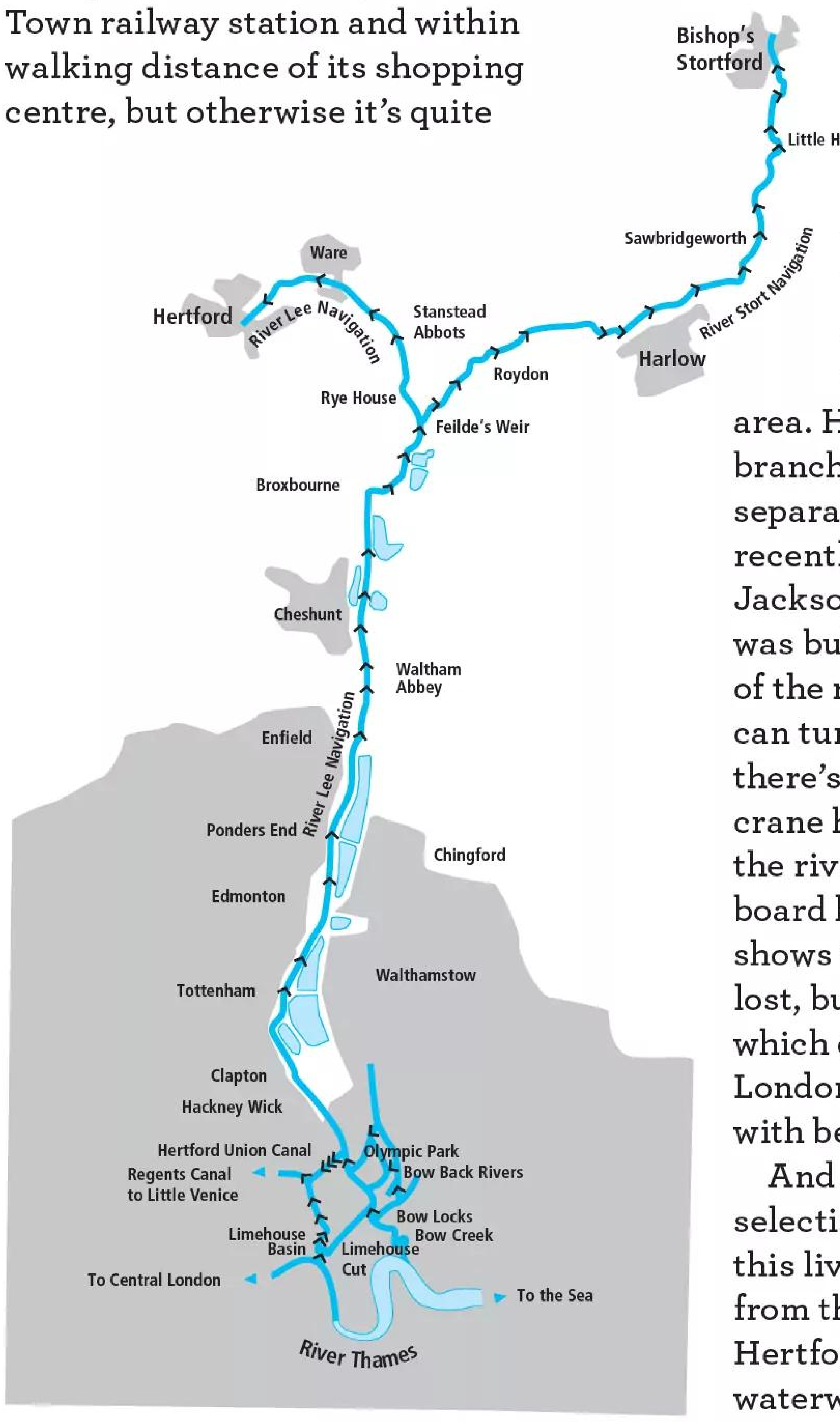
Locks occur at roughly one-mile intervals as the river passes Hunsdon Mead nature reserve (see inset) and Parndon Mill. Although the surroundings are entirely rural, the odd glimpse of a tall office block in the distance gives a clue that we're only a mile or two from the centre of Harlow New Town. The Stort does pass conveniently close to Harlow Town railway station and within walking distance of its shopping centre, but otherwise it's quite remarkable how the presence of a town of almost 100,000 population can have so little impact on the waterway, with trees screening much of the river as it passes on the north side of the town. How well it can maintain this isolation, given the ongoing northern expansion of the town, remains to be seen.

A particularly winding and wooded length leads to Harlow Old Town, beyond which another meandering reach heads out into the countryside again. A fine maltings building (carrying malt was one of the navigation's main purposes), accompanied by modern buildings designed to follow the same style, mark the river's arrival at Sawbridgeworth, an attractive old town with a selection of pubs.

Watch out for the low railway bridge on leaving the town – if levels are high after rain, this can limit the available headroom – and take it easy in larger craft on the sharp bends in this area. An old mill stream on the right at Hallingbury leads to a marina, then the river straightens somewhat for the final run into Bishop's Stortford. I can recommend the diminutive Lock & Latte café by Spellbrook Lock for excellent coffee and cookies to be enjoyed at waterside tables, then a pretty wooded length of river leads to the final two locks and the outskirts of Stortford.

A striking new footbridge built for the Millennium marks the beginning of the town, with new developments accompanying the waterway as it enters the urban area. Historically, it split into three branches in the town, each leading to separate wharves, but frustratingly as recently as 1974 two were filled in and the Jackson Square shopping development was built on the site, leaving just one arm of the river with a widening where boats can turn, but no real basin at the end. Still, there's room to moor, and an old hand-crane has been preserved as a reminder of the river's trading past. An interpretation board has a historic map which not only shows the arms of the river that have been lost, but also all the many former maltings which gave the river its trade in malt for London's breweries to supply the capital with beer.

And on that subject, there are a selection of pubs to slake your thirst in this lively market town before returning from this outpost on the Essex and Hertfordshire borders to the rest of the waterways network. CB


Bishop's Stortford
Little Hallingbury
Sawbridgeworth
River Stort Navigation
Harlow
Ware
Hertford
River Lee Navigation
Stanstead Abbots
Roydon
Rye House
Feilde's Weir
Broxbourne
Cheshunt
Waltham Abbey
Enfield
River Lee Navigation
Ponders End
Chingford
Edmonton
Walthamstow
Tottenham
Clapton
Hackney Wick
Hertford Union Canal
Olympic Park
Regents Canal to Little Venice
Bow Back Rivers
Bow Locks
Bow Creek
Limehouse Basin
Limehouse Cut
To Central London
To the Sea
River Thames

Moorings and turning point at the end of navigation in Bishop's Stortford

FACTFILE

BOATYARD SERVICES

Chandlery
Diesel
Elsan disposal
Gas
Holiday hire
Moorings
Pump-out
Repairs
Slipway

Limehouse Marina
020 7308 9930

Lee Valley Marina, Springfield
020 8806 1717

Enfield Dry Dock
07836 584148

Lee Valley Boat Centre, Broxbourne
01992 462085

Lee Valley Marina, Stanstead Abbotts
01920 870499

Lea Valley Narrowboat Co,
Stanstead Abbotts
01920 870068

Lea Valley Narrowboat Co, Hertford
01920 870068

Roydon Marina
01279 792777

Moorhen Marina, Harlow
01279 423066

Hallingbury Marina
01279 723568

CRUISE GUIDE **EXTRA**

LONDON LINKS

Martin Ludgate delves into the history of two short but useful East London waterway connections

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **MARTIN LUDGATE**

If you're visiting the rivers Lee and Stort (see our cruise guide on the preceding pages) from elsewhere on the waterways network, then you'll almost certainly arrive on the Lee via one of two short but useful links from the Regent's Canal.

The Limehouse Cut and the Hertford Union Canal (see map on page 54) might not be anybody's favourite waterways, being mostly dead straight and surrounded by inner East London, but they both have interesting histories, with signs still to be seen.

And one interesting facet of this history is that despite their function today as vital short cuts from the canals to the Lee, neither of them really fulfilled this role in their early days.

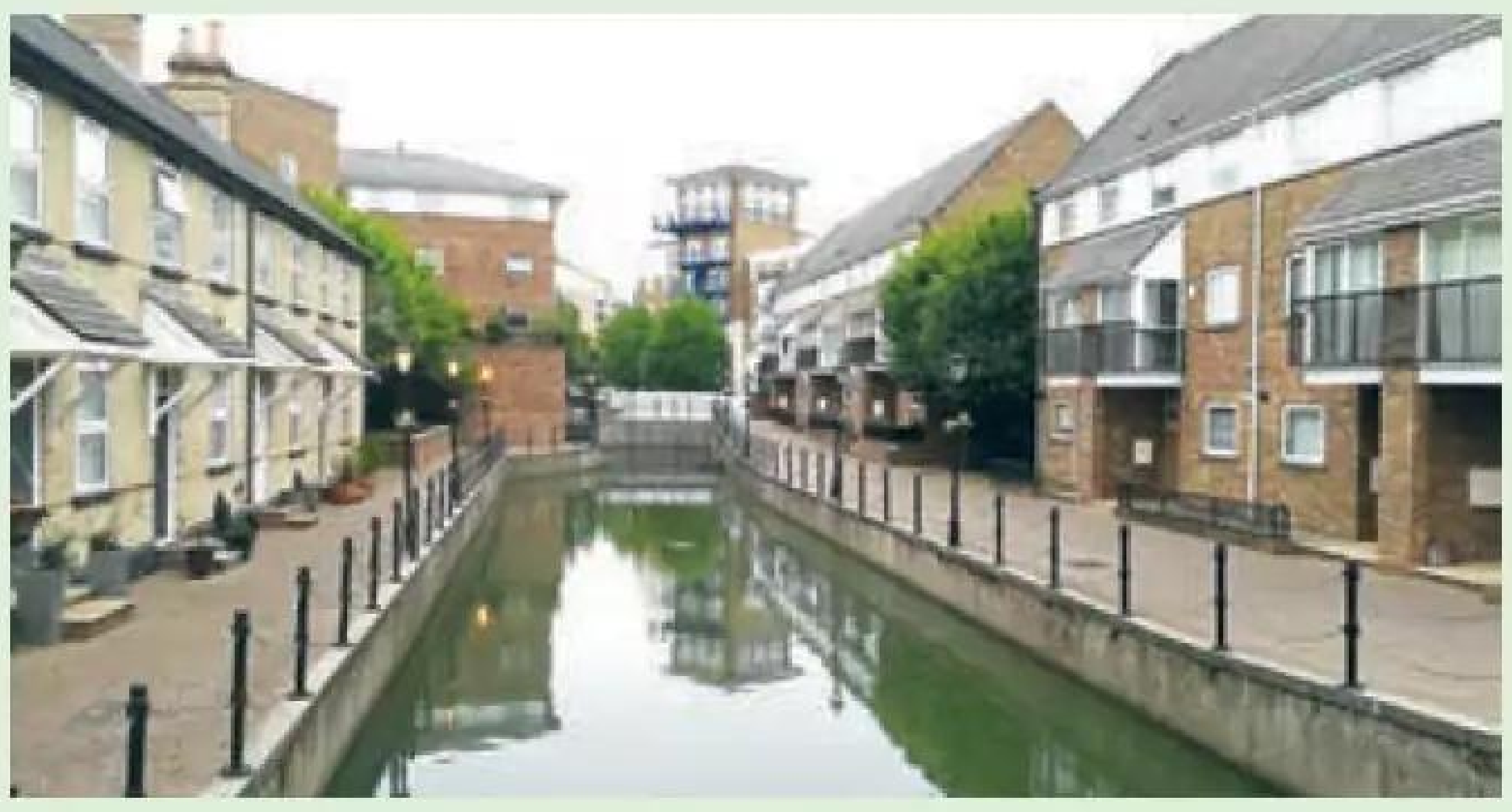
Unlike 30 years ago, today the Limehouse Cut is surrounded by new developments and a popular pace to moor

The Limehouse Cut

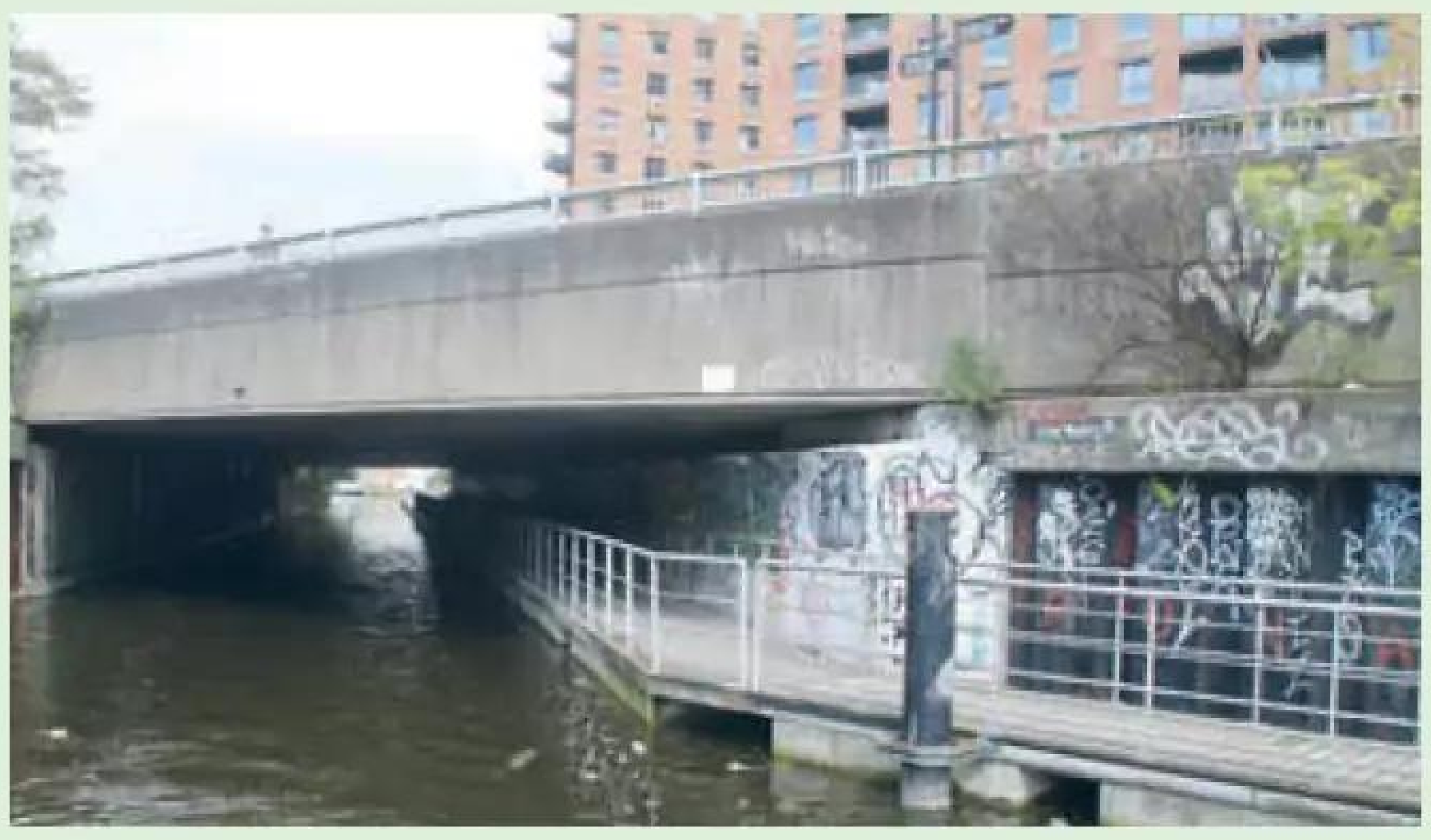
The Limehouse Cut pre-dates the Regent's Canal. It was built to facilitate trade to London from the Lee, which up until the late 18th Century would descend the river to Bromley-by-Bow, where barges would wait for the tide before lightermen would row them down the tidal Bow Creek, then up the Thames around the Isle of Dogs to Limehouse and on to central London. This laborious nine-mile journey could be cut to less than half that distance by building a cut from Bromley to Limehouse.

The Lee Commissioners began construction as part of a programme of 1760s improvements which also included new cuts through Hackney and Edmonton. Just over a mile long, the Limehouse Cut left the Lee at a new lock just above the Bromley tidal gates (where today's Bow Locks stand), and headed southwest to end at the original Limehouse Basin, from which a lock opened into the Thames. It opened in 1770, and was soon busy.

It did suffer from one problem: despite the locks at each end, it was semi-tidal. Its level was raised by high tides, which brought in silt; conversely its level was depleted by the tide-mills at Bromley taking water from it (until they were bought out by the navigation). By 1850, the Thames lock at Limehouse was becoming decrepit. But in the meantime, the Regent's Canal had opened, with its own Limehouse Basin and its own lock into the Thames, just a hundred yards up-river. The Regent's company were keen to enlarge their basin and merge it with the Lee's basin, but this needed parliamentary approval. In the interim, a connection was dug between the two waterways, and boats coming down the Limehouse Cut used the Regents' entrance lock to reach the Thames – but the bargemen disliked this congested route, and the Regents' plans were modified. Their basin was enlarged and equipped with a new ship-sized entrance lock (justifying the basin's new name of Regent's Canal Dock), but it didn't take over the Lee's basin; the connecting cut was blocked up, and the Limehouse Cut reverted to using its own river entrance with the derelict lock rebuilt.



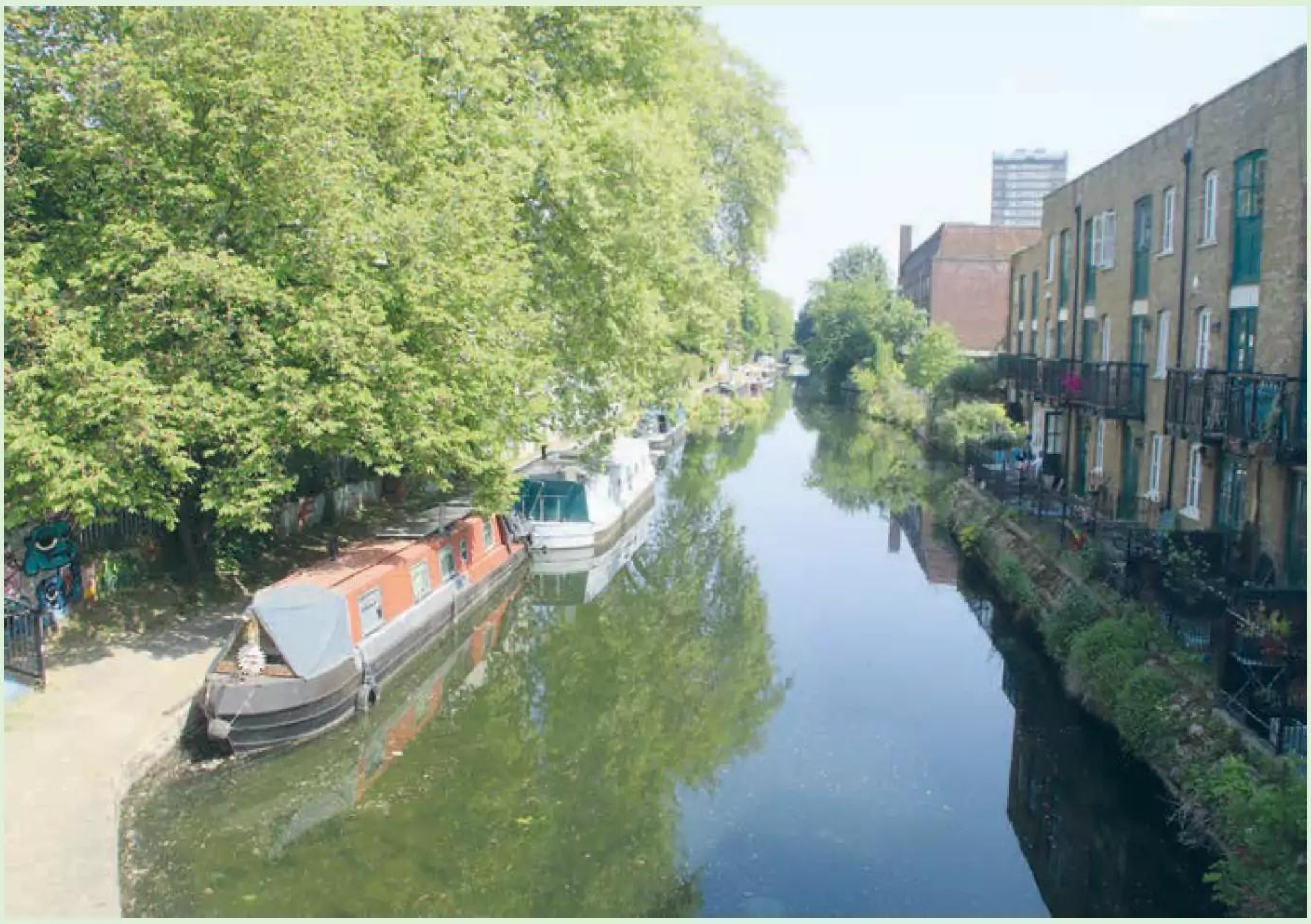
The original entrance lock from the Thames at Limehouse, bypassed and abolished in the 1960s, has been turned into an ornamental water feature



The floating towpath under the Blackwall Tunnel approach road

Fast forward to the 1960s, and the Limehouse entrance lock was again giving concern – and it made more sense to replace it. It was awkward to enter; its chamber was held together by wooden beams propping the side walls apart; the restricted site precluded expansion; with no space for balance beams, its gates were opened by chains and winches. But freight traffic couldn't be interrupted while a new lock was built. So instead, the connection to Regent's Canal Dock (which has since been renamed back to Limehouse Basin) was reinstated on a different alignment, and the old Thames lock abolished.

In 2000, the Limehouse Cut became easier to use when extra flood gates facing outwards were installed at Bow Locks to prevent the tide from affecting the Limehouse Cut and connected waterways. It's also gone from a barely-used waterway after the ending of freight traffic (I lived nearby for almost the entire 1980s and almost never saw a boat on it) to today, when new developments line the cut, the towpath side sees liveaboard boats moored and the offside has private pontoon moorings, and plenty of boats moving. But there are traces of its history to see: remains of the former lock at Bromley (an old gate is still in situ behind the new floating towpath under the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road bridge) and of a stop-lock added near Limehouse Basin when the original link was made in the 1850s. A hundred yards east along Narrow Street from today's Limehouse Basin entrance lock, you can see the site of the Limehouse Cut's original entrance lock: its site is now an ornamental water feature across which two rows of houses face each other. And one of the old winches that used to open the lock gates there is now on display by the Regent's Canal at Hampstead Road (Camden) Lock.



The Hertford Union Canal, with Victoria Park on the left

The Hertford Union Canal

The Hertford Union Canal, by contrast, post-dated the Regents, making it one of London's later waterways. It was also one of its less successful ones.

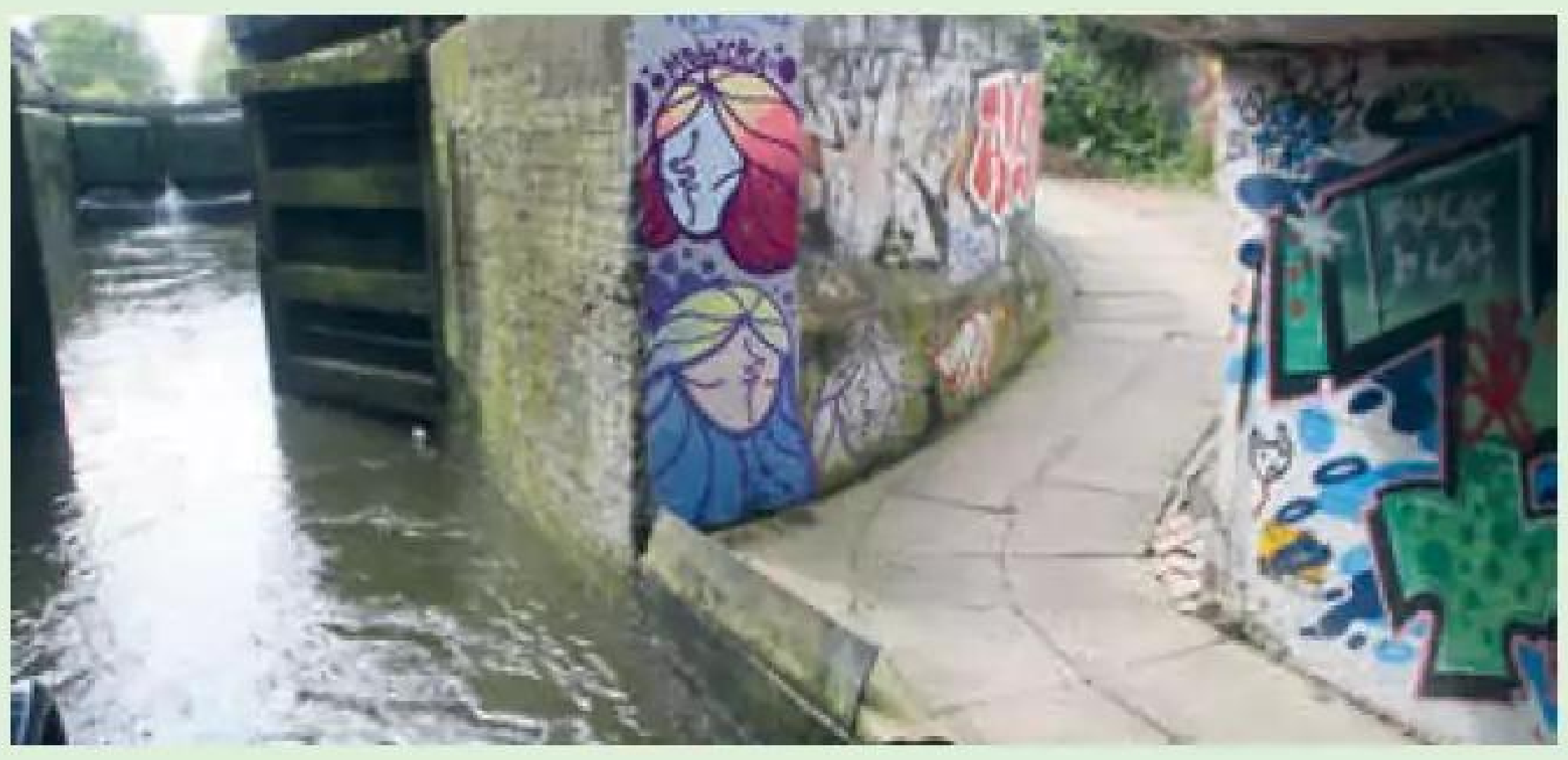
Sometimes also called Duckett's Canal, it was conceived by George Duckett Junior, proprietor of the River Stort Navigation, which he felt stood to benefit from a link allowing Lee and Stort trade to be diverted to the Regent's Canal – especially if proposals for a canal to link the Stort to Cambridge came to fruition. They didn't, and the one-mile canal climbing via three locks from Hackney Wick on the Lee to just below Old Ford Lock on the Regents, and built entirely at Duckett's own expense, saw little trade.

Part of the problem was that through traffic would need to pay tolls to the Lee, the Regents, and the new canal. In an effort to drum up business, Duckett offered to carry goods toll-free on his canal so long as the Regent's gave him a proportion of their tolls, but the Regent's were unmoved. Later they did reduce their own tolls for through traffic from the Hertford Union, but what looked briefly like better prospects for the canal came to little. By 1848, the canal was unused, and was dammed off to prevent water being lost from the Regent's.

Duckett put the canal up for sale; eventually in 1857 the Regent's bought it and put it in good order, and it has remained navigable since.

Today, as the shorter of the two non-tidal routes to the Lee and Stort, it sees considerable use. Like the Limehouse Cut, its surroundings have become less industrial – although on the north side, it has never really been industrial as Victoria Park accompanies most of its length. It's a pleasant cruise through the three locks, and once again there are a few historical features to spot.

The first is the gateless former stop-lock at the top end, reminding us that this and the Regent's were separate canals, whose water supplies needed to be protected. The second is the shallow rise of the bottom lock, resulting from changes to the water levels in the Lee Navigation when Homerton (or Hackney) Lock was abolished in 1862. And the third is a metal plate extending upwards from the towpath edge at the tail of the middle lock (see picture). This is a rare survivor from the period from the 1950s to the early 1970s, when unpowered lighters were towed by small towpath tractors. (You can see one in the London Canal Museum near King's Cross) The metal plate was installed as a 'crash barrier' to reduce the chance of a tractor running away on the slope, failing to make the turn, and ending up in the canal. CB



The metal plate intended to stop towpath tractors from falling in the canal

It's a sharp turn from the Regent's Canal into the former stop-lock at the start of the Hertford Union

Knowle Hall Wharf
Canal Boat Services

Building individual boats
for individual people

BOAT BUILD
REPAINT
SERVICING
DRY DOCK

Find out more

01564 778210 | www.knowlehallwharf.co.uk
Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull B93 0JJ

V C Marine
Inland Waterway Specialists

vcmarine.co.uk 01753 652502

Nowhere Fast – 58ft Semi-Traditional Stern £60,000

Nowhere Fast is a well-maintained narrowboat built in 2013 with a steel construction of (10-6-5-4mm), last blacked with new anodes in August 2021. All batteries were replaced in 2024. Powered by a Barrus Shire 45hp engine with PRM 150D2 gearbox, she features a stainless steel 550L water tank, Sterling inverter/charger, solar panels, and a galvanic isolator. Accommodation includes 4 berths (crossed double + convertible sofa), full galley, bathroom with ¾ bath and shower, and saloon. Heating is provided by Eberspacher and a solid fuel stove, with hot water from the engine, immersion, or heater.

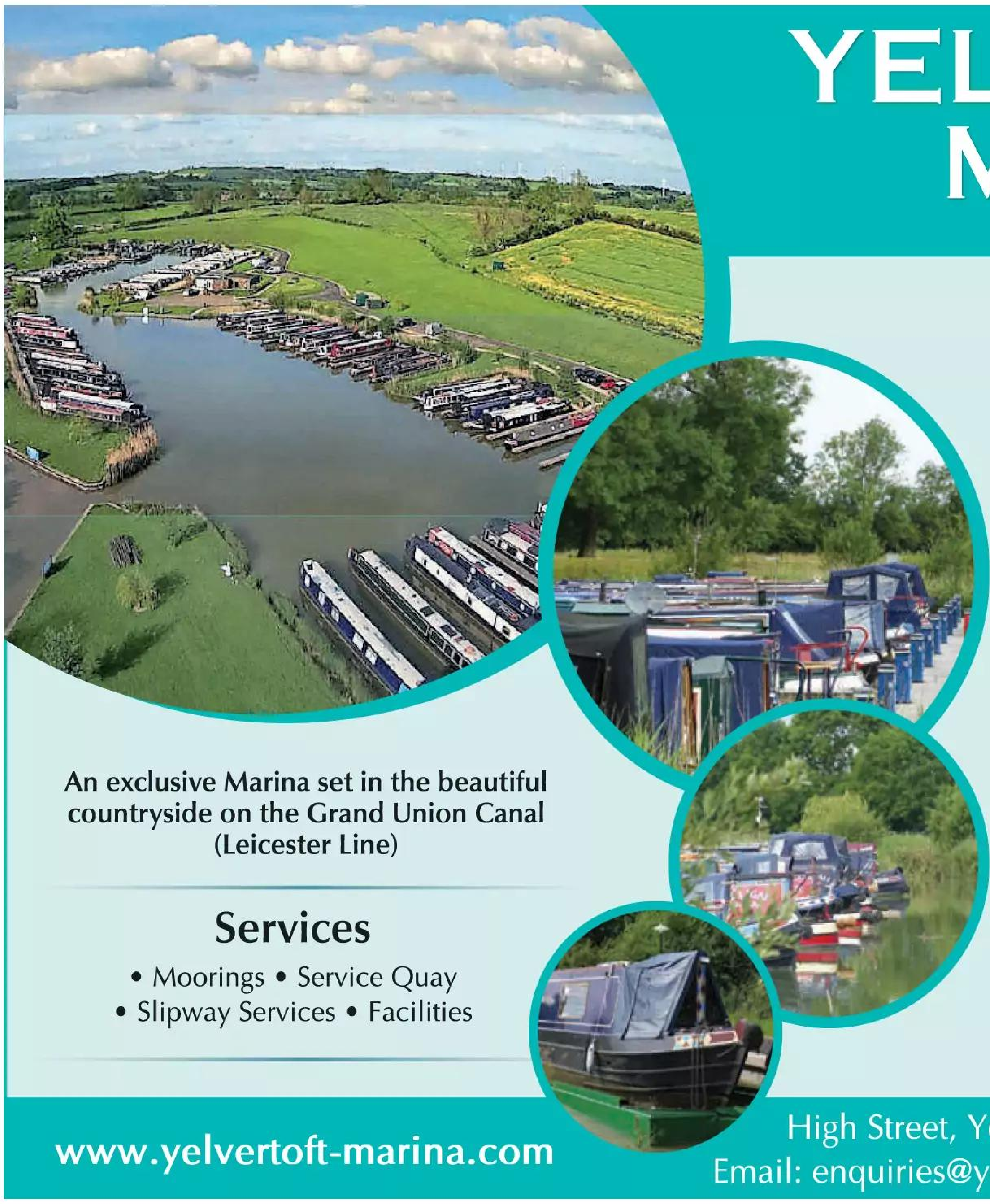
For boat sales based to the west of London
Canal narrowboats
Widebeams
London Residential

BRITISH MARINE LEADING THE INDUSTRY
ABYA PROFESSIONAL YACHT BROKERS

Professionally qualified brokers working to industry standards

THE BOATYARD, MANSION LANE, IVER, SL0 9RG
01753 652502 | 07860 480079 | kb@vcmarine.co.uk

YELVERTOFT MARINA
The place to be!



An exclusive Marina set in the beautiful countryside on the Grand Union Canal (Leicester Line)

Services
- Moorings • Service Quay
- Slipway Services • Facilities

The Platinum Package

Parking near to your boat
Showers
Elsan point
WiFi
Discounted diesel for moorers
Lending library
DVD exchange
Discounted pump-outs
Gated entry
Lounge activities

www.yelvertoft-marina.com

High Street, Yelvertoft, Northamptonshire, NN6 6AL
Email: enquiries@yelvertoft-marina.com | Tel: **01788 822292**

THE WATERWAYS ARE BURSTING INTO LIFE

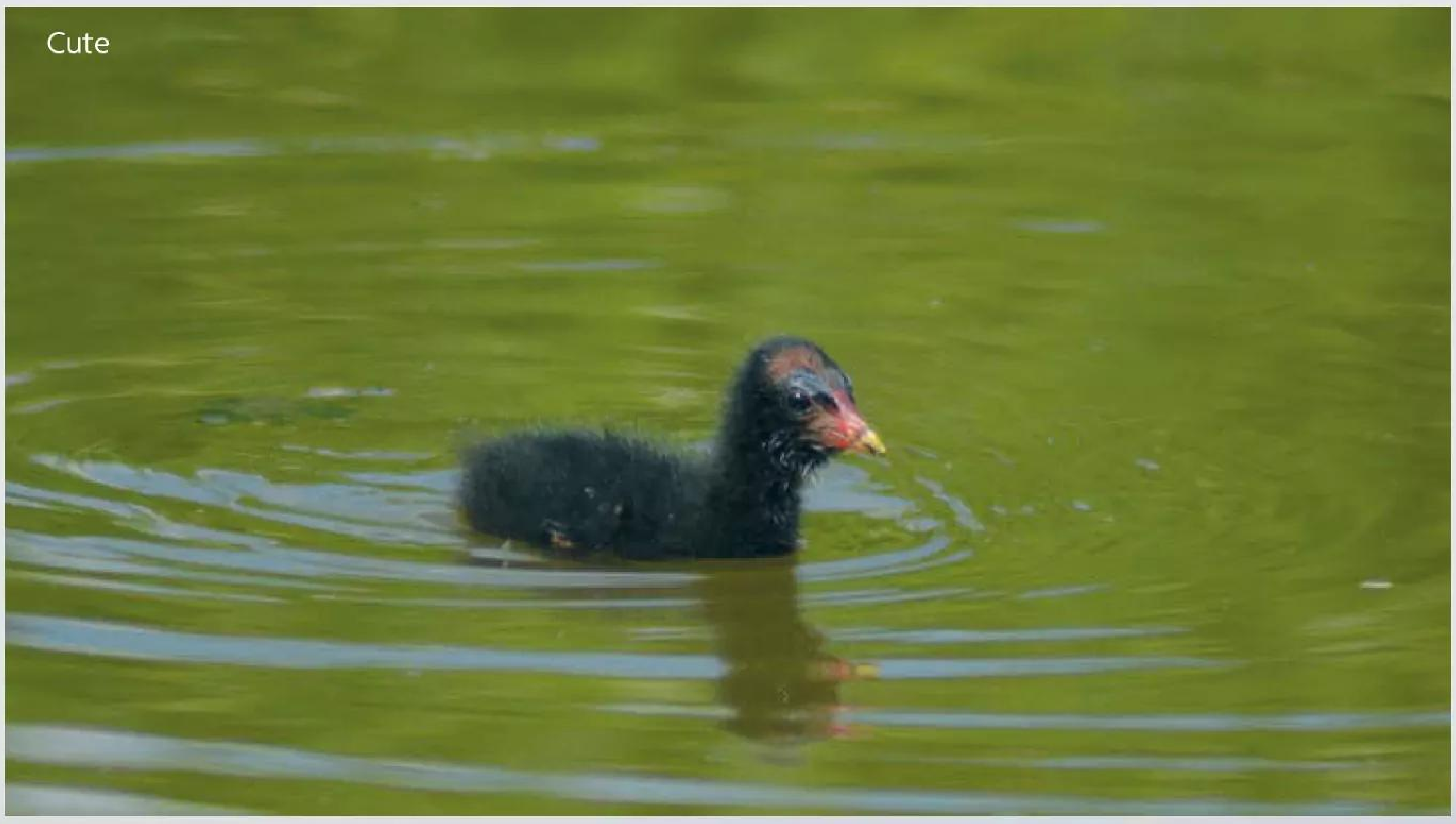
Bones is at home with nature among the kingfishers, cuckoos and barn owls

It was a beautiful morning. Spring was marching on and the blossom-laden trees had advanced through the glorious beautiful display of fluffy colours and were starting to flower. The waterways had also started to come alive with the colours and cries of new life. I have always loved it when the waterways burst into life after a long barren winter. The insects, birds, irises and lilies waft around offering sprinklings of colour amidst the greens of the waterway. We love watching the dragon and damsel flies fly around the river bank too. They dance from leaf to leaf and a stillness and peace descends upon me as we bask in their colours and dances of nature.

The morning light is particularly special. My routine stays the same all season round; I grind the coffee beans with the dawn and brew a coffee on the stove. In warmer weather, once the coffee is done, I take the first brew of the day to the front deck instead of huddled in front of the fire. The cool air swirls around under the bright early morning sky and a cacophony of sounds from nature fills the air. The water glistens as the mist rises from the water, and the morning light takes over as the sun rises higher and higher above the fields. As I watch the morning settle in, I am reminded of the wonder of life on the waterway.

As the days took hold, I was sitting outside and heard my first cuckoo of the year. I was surprised, as I hadn't heard one here before. I am told that the cuckoo usually arrives, after a spell in Africa, in March/April time. Then, in summer they

Lily pads



Cute

fly back again. The cuckoo population in the UK has declined by over 60% since the 1980s, and no-one knows why. There's a great deal of speculation that climate change has impacted the number of available nests for cuckoos to lay their eggs. This affects the cuckoo because they don't do the hard work of building a nest and rearing their young. They much prefer another species to do the hard work. Apparently, a cuckoo can lay an egg every day in a 'host' nest, for 25 consecutive days!

Talking of hard work – I empathise. After a long week at work we often find ourselves wanting to sit on deck chairs in the bright evening light reading and watching the world go by. This helps us decompress from the busy working life, and re-connect with nature. It's so beautiful being able to recharge the proverbial batteries this way. There are often lovely surprises to help the process too.

This week we were sitting outside and I heard the call of a kingfisher. The kingfisher then flew right past us, followed by another one! Our walk last night was magical too. A barn owl stretched its wings over the field in close view. Then, when I was almost beside myself with joy from the sight, another barn owl swept over the river towards us – it came across our path and joined its mate in the field beyond. It was incredible to have such a close up view. It reminded

Idyllic mooring

me of a time many years ago when I shimmied up the side of an old barn in the middle of a field miles away from the road. I managed to grab a hold on the walls and climb up to a small window. I silently pulled myself up and as I looked through the window there looking back were a family of owls. It was an amazing experience and I was filled with the awe of nature as I made my way back to the canal. I haven't climbed a barn since as I don't want to disturb the peace of nature. Seeing an owl in flight is always a joy, and having the owls sweep along beside me was a real privilege.

Nature is a huge part of boat life. I often find it difficult to balance wafting around in awe of the waterways, with the hard work of boat life. While boating is a good life, it is also a hard life. Part of that is getting all the jobs done! While jobs can be ignored, sitting outside among nature also involves seeing the boat and all those areas that need cleaning or painting stand out. Besides, it's important to look after things so they last longer. I must say that's not my forte – the weather is great when I am at work, and not so great when I am at home! Still, I am pressing on. I started to service the engine the other day, but encountered a small problem with the diesel filters. By next month I should have resolved that! Until then... CB

After a long week at work we often find ourselves wanting to sit on deck chairs in the bright evening light reading and watching the world go by

Mist over the waterway

ROOFTOP GARDENING

with Julie Clark

Midsummer on the boat, in fine weather, is hard to beat. Slipping away for a bit of quiet time really does recharge the batteries – in both senses! This summer I spent a little time on the Paddington Arm, part of the system not generally thought of as particularly scenic with all the new developments under construction along the way. However, I did enjoy a walk in Paradise Fields, visited the Ealing Beaver Project and had a stroll in Whittlers' Wood. It also gave me time to have a rest and tend to my rooftop garden.

Pots of plants growing on the roof of a boat will need a lot of water. It is more the wind than the sun that dries them out and if you have put in as many plants as possible, and I always do, they will need watering almost every day.

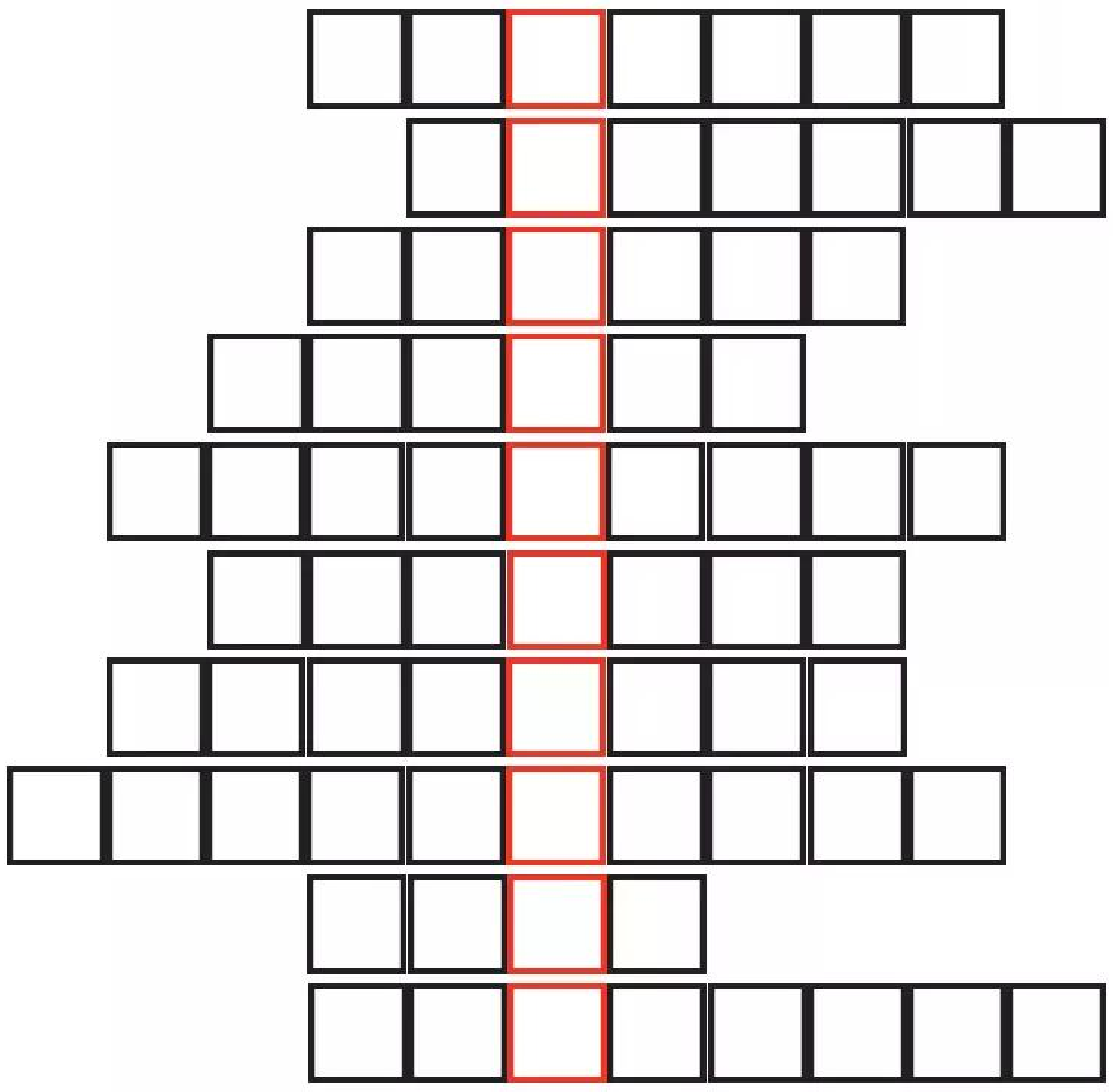
I do use canal water (if it looks reasonably clean) for flowers, but I wouldn't do the same for my vegetables and herbs. I also look for an organic fertiliser if I haven't made my own nettle or comfrey water to prevent the run-off of chemicals entering the waterway.

This month my flowers are gorgeous. I tried to be colour-coordinated to look my best for the festivals I attended and with a yellow, red and green livery, so with these colours I had a great choice of flowers. I teamed up red pelargoniums with yellow million bells and orange and yellow Bidens with their lovely trailing by colourful flowers. I also selected sweet scented Nemesia and red Diascia var. Little Drifter – who could resist! With regular feeding and watering they are all flowering profusely and will hopefully last a few more months.

If you have planted vegetables, you may find some of these are starting to give you a crop. Peas and beans benefit from being grown near to flowers since these will attract the pollinators needed – do not let your beans dry out otherwise they will drop their flowers and you won't get a single bean! Use self-watering pots and keep feeding. If you have not used a self-watering flower pot, it is possible to invert a plastic bottle into the soil, this will act as DIY irrigation system. I leave the cap on and make a hole in it, to slow down the release of water, useful should you need to leave your plants for a couple of days.

Cut and come again salad crops can still be planted in succession every couple of weeks to maintain sweet succulent leaves. Should your coriander, radish or lettuce go to flower, remember, these are edible as well and some people even think radish seed pods taste better than the actual radish!

WATERWAYS ACROSTIC



Name the Oxford Canal features:

- The canal's only tunnel
- Short cut to the Thames
- Pub overlooking a canal junction
- Famous old boatyard with the canal system's oldest drydock
- Village with two canalside pubs and a lift bridge
- Junction with the Grand Union Canal
- Where the journey described in the book 'Narrow Boat' began
- An aqueduct crosses this river
- Village famous for a festival and a battle
- Busiest locks on the canal

Fit your answers into the grid so that the coloured boxes spell out the name of a lock on the Oxford Canal

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

Guildford, Henley, Evesham, Castleford, Newark, Kegworth, Brandon, Thrapston, Hertford, Boroughbridge

Putting the answers in the grid in the right order spells out the final answer: Tewkesbury

ASK THE EXPERTS

Send your questions to: canalboat@rivercanalrescue.co.uk

ELECTRIC MOTORS AND BATTERIES

WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU?

Pressure to cut carbon emissions, coupled with rising fuel prices, is prompting increasing numbers of boaters to consider switching diesel or petrol-driven engines to a greener electric alternative. While this is a good option, it's important to be aware that many systems on the market are high voltage and therefore could compromise safety, especially if they do not confirm to European Commission standards.

There are also other factors to take into account; the infrastructure for pure electric motors is extremely poor in the UK so choosing the right system to match usage and cruising habits is key.

This month, River Canal Rescue's managing director, Stephanie Horton, explains the differing solutions available and why it's important to thoroughly research and understand what will work best for your vessel.

PURE ELECTRIC

These boats require a plug in to charge and a lack of infrastructure can quickly result in vessels running out of power and becoming stranded or only having short cruising ranges, which defeats the object of having a boat.

PARALLEL HYBRID

These electric boats have a normal diesel engine, plus an electric motor and batteries (the diesel engine is there to recharge the batteries once they're depleted). This is a good option for vessels that want to benefit from green energy but do not want to be restricted by range or the need to stop and recharge.

SERIAL HYBRID

These electric boats utilise an electric motor with a battery bank, but instead of a diesel engine to recharge depleted batteries, there's a generator. Generally, this system is more efficient, however, it does require a specialist generator to supply the correct charge for the battery bank (you can't just buy a suitcase-style generator). If your batteries are low, you'll need to stop and recharge using the generator, which can impact your cruising range.

BATTERY BANKS

Electric boats need battery banks to power their motors, and these again need careful consideration, as different types of batteries have contrasting efficiencies and power (something we'll cover in another article). Similarly, charging systems and battery management systems – vital for electric boats – need careful scrutiny. Do you want the battery bank for just propulsion or to supply domestic power, for example? Every element has to be balanced according to the individual boat and your requirements. One size does not fit all, so it's important to research what your boat needs, and what propulsion system and supporting battery arrangement is right for you.

SYNCHRONOUS ENERGY

Usage is where separate banks are used for propulsion and domestic house supply. Generally, more useful for liveaboard boats, it's key to ensure the propulsion and house banks are physically separated. If not, you risk the house bank depleting the propulsion bank.

ASYNCHRONOUS ENERGY

Usage is where only one bank of batteries is used for both the house and propulsion requirements. This is useful when there's a balanced use of energy. However, there's a risk if you use too much battery in one area, it can deplete the bank and leave power for the other use unavailable.

LITHIUM BATTERIES

Becoming popular, but a lack of understanding and knowledge about charging and temperature requirements mean DIY installations could potentially place vessels and owners at risk.

These batteries comprise a set of four cells so typically 3.2V to make the 12V. They need to receive a consistent charge (unlike lead acid which can tolerate variable charging from an alternator) and can only accept charge between temperatures of 0C-45C.

Lithium batteries react violently to exposure to damp air and therefore pose a risk of explosion which will occur if not managed correctly. When they explode, they're nearly impossible to control as they suffer from 'thermal runaway' – not even submersion in water will extinguish them. Due to these factors, a battery management system is imperative to manage and reduce risk associated with these batteries.

Most off-the-shelf products from large suppliers provide packages, and in some cases, supply an electric motor with lithium batteries; including all the features needed to ensure safe operation. It's important to note, most insurance companies will not cover vessels with Lithium batteries installed, some will if they're installed by an 'authorised installer', so checking and updating your insurance policy is imperative.

SWITCHING OVER

We're receiving more enquiries about replacing engines, indicating boaters are keen to make that switch. However, people must do their research. Some options to be wary of include inefficient imported electric motors

requiring higher voltages to work efficiently and traditional high voltage 230V or three-phase motors that rely on 48V or higher battery packs. When used with an inverter they exceed the Low Voltage Directive threshold, potentially putting boats and owners in danger.

The Government's Low Voltage Directive says 72V and below is considered safe and 50V and below is ultra-safe. There are rumours among some high voltage electric motor suppliers that they are pushing to have this value reduced, i.e. high voltage would be classed above 24V.

When making any modifications to your boat, it's important to talk to the experts and know exactly what's going to be the best option for your particular vessel. If your vessel was constructed after 1998 then changing from a diesel to electric engine requires a Post Construction Assessment. Currently, there's only one company undertaking this – HPi Verification Services, and at a cost of up to £6000, it's potentially the most restrictive element to moving to a greener solution.

WIN A BILGEAWAY FILTER KIT

To celebrate River Canal Rescue's 25th anniversary, managing director, Stephanie Horton, is giving away prizes every month, throughout the year. In our July issue, two Canal Boat readers can win a 10in Bilgeaway filter kit, worth £99.98.

Described as 'the world's first truly environmentally-friendly bilge discharge filter', Bilgeaway uses a non-toxic solution to extract hydrocarbon contaminants (petrol, diesel, engine oil etc) from water and render them non-reactive, leaving environmentally-friendly contents in a cartridge which can be disposed of and the housing re-used.

For your chance to win a Bilgeaway kit, simply email your name, address and phone number to CBcompetition@rivercanalrescue.co.uk putting July Bilgeaway win in the subject line and you'll be entered into the prize draw.

CELEBRATING 25th ANNIVERSARY
RCR
KEEPING YOU MOVING

Entries close at 23:59 on 30/6/25 and the winner will be drawn 1/7/25. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the close of entries. The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry is free and open to residents of the UK aged over 18. Employees of Kelsey Media and their family members are not eligible to enter. Only one entry permitted per person, no bulk entries will be accepted. There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferable. Kelsey Media reserves the right to cancel the competition, if circumstances change that are beyond our control. By entering you agree to be bound by all the rules and agree that your surname and county may be released if you win.

MELISSA'S GALLEY GRUB

LAMB, GOATS' CHEESE AND MINTY BROAD BEAN SALAD

This seasonal, satisfying salad is the perfect lazy summertime lunch or supper, whether the sun comes out to play or not. It's a flexible friend too! If you're dining a deux, substitute the butterflied lamb leg for a couple of lamb leg steaks and cut the other ingredients by half. For a vegetarian version, replace the lamb with roasted squash wedges, and if you're not keen on goats' cheese, feta or pecorino both work well.

If you're getting ahead, the lamb can be roasted the day before you assemble the salad and both the minty bean purée and the salad dressing can be prepared up to two days ahead and stored in airtight containers in the fridge.

If you prefer a warm salad, either cook (or barbecue?) the lamb just before you're planning to eat or wrap it in foil and reheat it in a medium-hot oven for 20-30 minutes. The minty beans can be reheated too.

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

FOR THE LAMB:

- 1 butterflied lamb leg (700g approx.)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 4-5 anchovies (from a tin)
- A few sprigs of fresh rosemary, finely chopped

FOR THE MINTY BEANS:

- 300g broad beans (preferably fresh, but frozen work too)
- 200g frozen peas
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- ½-1 bunch of fresh mint
- The finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

FOR THE DRESSING:

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp red or white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp runny honey
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard

FOR THE SALAD:

- 100g mixed salad leaves
- 150g goats' cheese

- To serve: a handful of pomegranate seeds; chunky bread, for mopping up all the delicious juices

METHOD

Make little slits all over the lamb and rub with a rough paste made from the olive oil, garlic, rosemary and anchovies. Allow to marinate (covered and refrigerated) for up to 12 hours, or at least while you preheat the oven to 180c/gas mark 5. Bring the lamb to room temperature before cooking and roast for around 25 minutes per 500g.

Cover with foil and allow to cool.

To make the minty beans: simmer the broad beans and peas in boiling water for around 3 minutes, or until tender. Drain and refresh under cold water and slip the broad beans out of their silvery skins (discarding the skins). Tip into the bowl of a food processor with the oil, garlic, mint, zest, ½ the lemon juice, 2 tbsp water and plenty of seasoning and pulse to create a fairly smooth paste. Set to one side.

To make the salad dressing: whisk all the ingredients together in a small jug, season to taste and set to one side.

To serve, carve the lamb into generous slices. Tumble the salad leaves across serving plates and drizzle with the dressing. Top with the minty beans followed by the lamb, then dot with cubes of goats' cheese and sprinkle the pomegranate seeds (if using) across the whole affair. Serve at room temperature, accompanied by the bread… and a glass (or two!) of chilled rosé.

WATERSIDE WILDLIFE

ENCHANTER'S NIGHTSHADE, DRAGONFLIES AND WATER-LILIES

Will the Circe of Greek mythology protect you from elvish spells?

Giving protection from elvish spells in Anglo-Saxon England, Enchanter's nightshade is steeped in superstition. Its Latin name, Circaea, comes from the enchantress Circe of Greek mythology. You can find this common, hairy plant growing in sun-dappled woodland and hedgerows along the towpath, especially on rich, heavy soils. The oval leaves grow in opposite pairs and taper to a fine tip. The tiny flowers have two deeply notched petals from which stamens poke out, and grow in slender, loose spikes – like you see in the much larger Rosebay willowherb. Despite its name, Enchanter's nightshade is a member of the willowherb family.

The dry drooping fruits are covered with hooked bristles to latch on to passing animals – unlike the other willowherbs whose seed is distributed by wind. It also spreads from a creeping rhizome and can regenerate from the smallest piece, so can be difficult to eliminate from gardens.

The rather insignificant appearance of Enchanter's nightshade may not excite you, but flying around the towpath in summer you can find insects that in medieval times were believed to be in league with the devil. They neither bite nor sting, but these "devilish darning needles" or "poisonous winged snakes" might today have been known as "horse-stingers" or "adderflies" instead of "dragonflies", the folk name that has stuck.

Three hundred million years ago dragonflies as big as seagulls were flying over our land mass. Warmer temperatures and high oxygen levels may have played a part in the evolution of these giants. Nowadays, the largest dragonflies you will see in Britain are a mere 7-8 cm long. The fastest flying of this dazzling group of insects are the hawkers: their enormous, bulging eyes can see in colour and they catch insect prey in mid-air as they hawk up and down or in a zigzag fashion. Moving their wings in a figure of eight motion, they can turn and loop with great agility, fly sideways or backwards and hover.

The Emperor dragonfly is one of the largest dragonflies in Europe and can be seen on the wing near large ponds, canals and ditches from June to August. Rarely moving far from water, the Emperor flies up high to look for its insect prey. The highly territorial male is pale-blue with an apple-green thorax and a black stripe running the length of the body, blue-green eyes, and a yellow leading wing vein. He flies for long periods without resting, his abdomen slightly drooping in flight. The female has a duller green abdomen with a brown stripe and greenish eyes, though both sexes can be difficult to distinguish from other hawkers at a distance.

The female oviposits (lays her eggs) into floating pondweed and they hatch after about three weeks. Emperor dragonflies spend one or two years living under water as nymphs, eating aquatic insects, tadpoles and small fish, before eventually emerging as winged adults during the night. Commonest in the south and west, they have expanded their range over recent years and have now been recorded in Scotland.

The Latin name for the genus of water-lilies, Nymphaea, was inspired by the nymphs of Greek mythology. In a Native American legend, the water-lily was a star that fell from the sky and was transformed into a flower when it hit the water. The showy White water-lily is immortalized in poetry for the pure white beauty of its flowers and the Elizabethans believed that the powdered rhizome would encourage chastity.

Blooming from June to September, the flowers grow up to 20cm in diameter with 20 to 25 petals, making it the UK's largest native wild flower. Floating amidst the rounded, leathery leaves – lily pads – the flowers only open in sun. The rest of the plant is submerged, growing from a rhizome in the mud at the bottom. The lack of submerged leaves renders White water-lily especially vulnerable to disturbance by boats breaking the floating surface leaves – its natural habitat is in still or very slow moving water. Much of our native population has probably now been replaced by cultivated escapees. Enjoy the enchantments of summer. CB

RESTORATION

PART ELEVEN

In the continued restoration of her boat, Claire goes from one AFO (another flippin' obstacle) to another... but gets there in the end

Spring had sprung, the roadworks had subsided so that driving up and down was no longer a full-time job, and there we were, back at the boat face. Nothing indicates you've made a bit of progress like a patch of dry carpet, and carefully positioning my boot soles on a tiny square of nasty, stained, synthetic rough brown crispness felt like pure luxury. To be honest, after what I'd been through on this job, not hearing a squelch when I lifted my foot was a treat and a half. Talk about easily pleased, eh?

The roof was supported and I could finally remove all the props. The front hull flange was clean and rust-treated, and ready to receive the foundations of a new wall-slash-window combo. I'd got all my tools and timber on board, and even a can of linseed oil I'd picked up for future reference a couple of years earlier. Because that's how closely real life was matching the project's hilarious long-abandoned schedule...

So! Having had the luxury of the howling months to think about exactly how I was going to attack this important part of the structure, the first job was to put a channel in the bottom frame member so it could straddle the hull flange for maximum stability and minimum protrusion. Enter my tiny table saw, a bargain basement 500-Watt Clarke 8in model I'd bought from Machine Mart specifically for this spiralling project. They're still popularly priced now, by the way, currently at £107.98.

It's basic, but having now worked the lightweight, highly portable, little thing pretty hard, I can say with conviction that it represents excellent value. But! While it does have provision for blade angling, it was only at this point that I realised it didn't have the facility for raising and lowering the blade to varying cut depths. The channel needed to be accurately carved to just a touch deeper than the flange. My heart plunged into the Medway mud at the realisation that, for all my preparation, I was clearly facing another flipping obstacle.

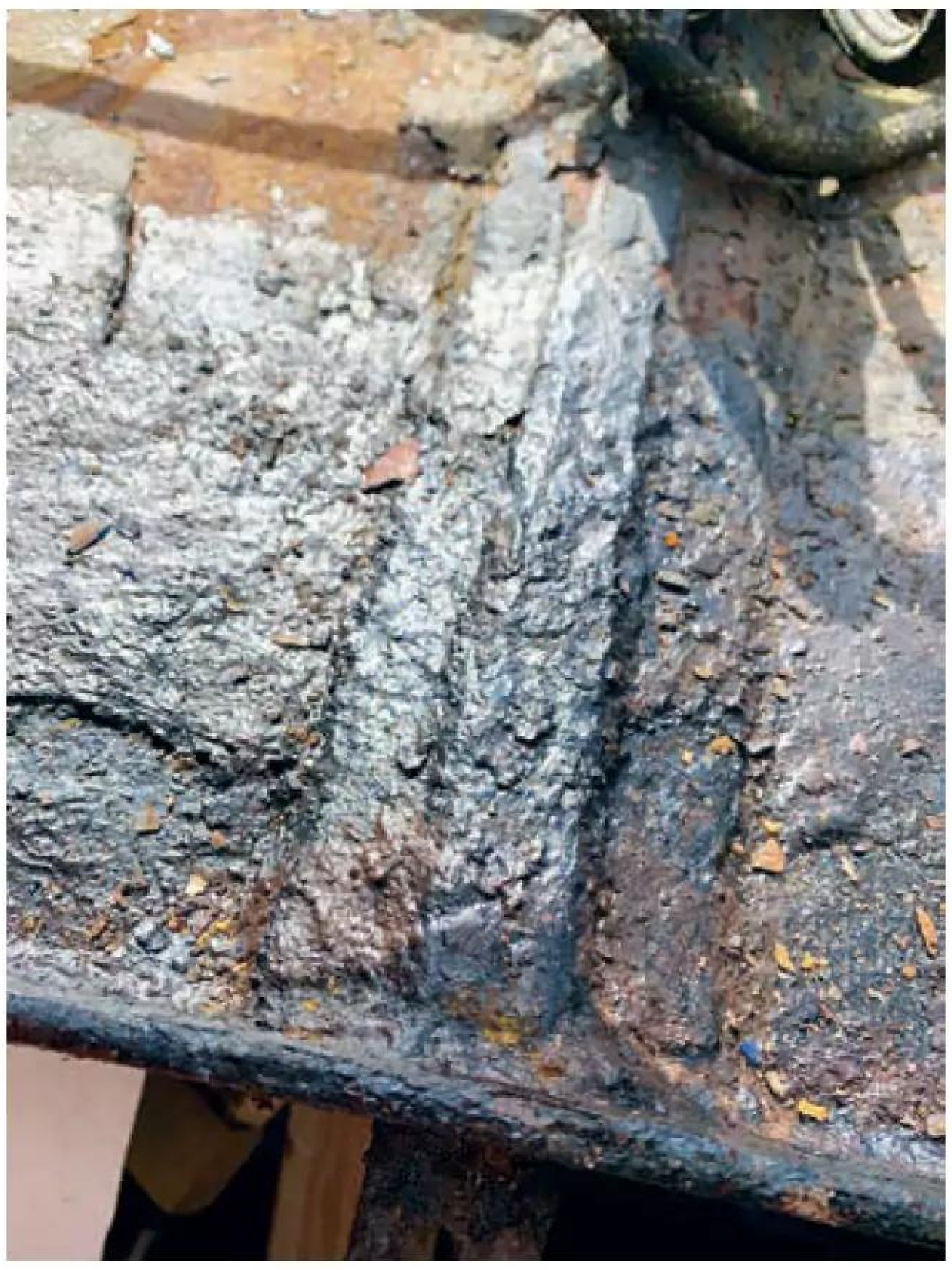
Released from its winter tarpaulin, the window hangs freely in mid-air, but at least it's no longer pulling the roof down

Not really a foundation for a sustainable future, the whole of the original exploded framework will have to come out. But first I must get that enormous heavy window supported...

But no! Look again! I double-checked the depth of the flange, and it was 40mm – exactly the same as the maximum cut depth of the fixed saw. There is no law that says you can only cut through little strips on a hobby-quality table saw. In fact, there is an actual official law (because I said so) that says you can do what you like with your own toys, and nobody can stop you.

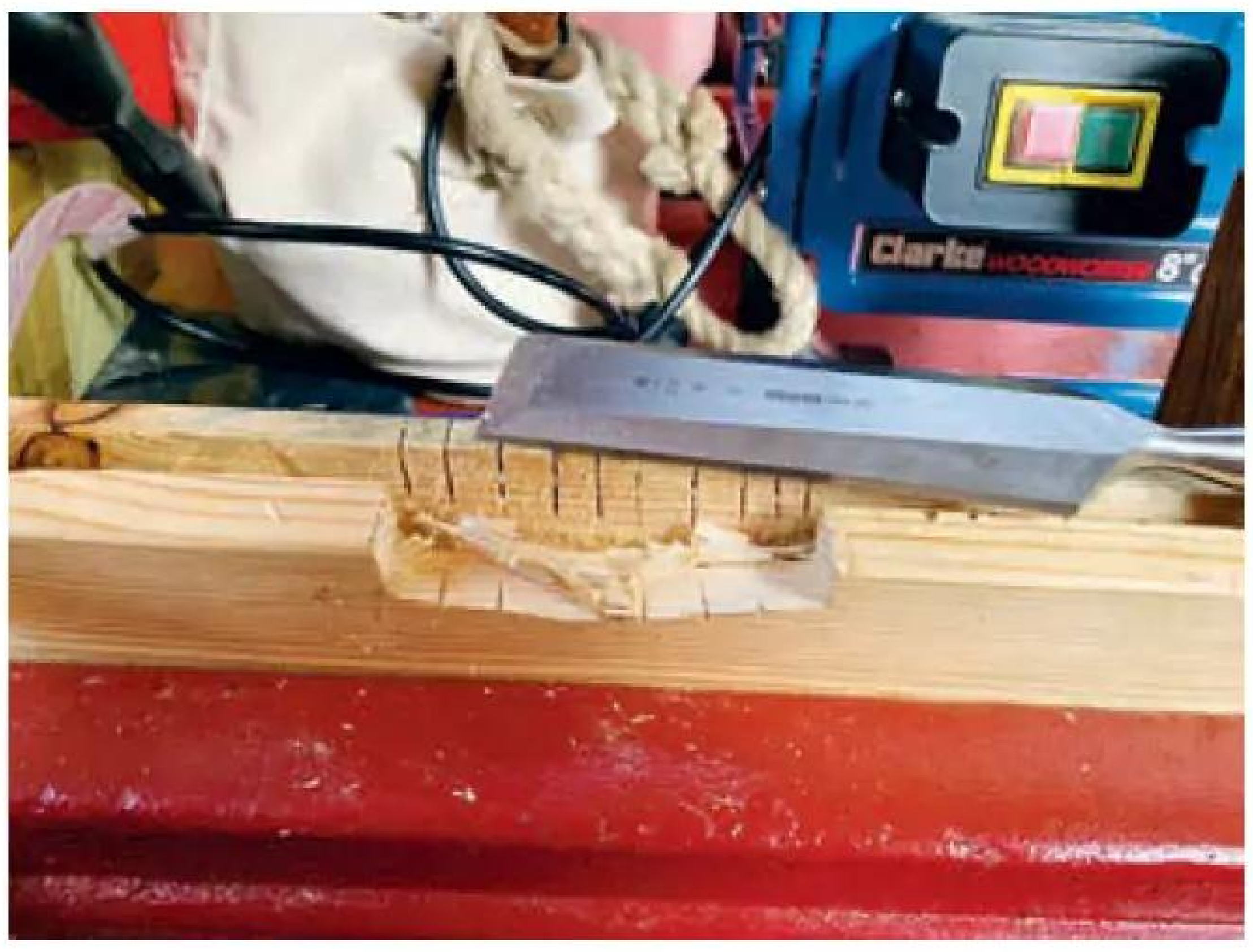
LIBERON
BOILED LINSEED OIL

Repeated coats of linseed oil will not only protect the base rail from water ingress, they'll also improve strength and flexibility so the sturdy timber can be bent to pop onto the slightly curved flange of the hull

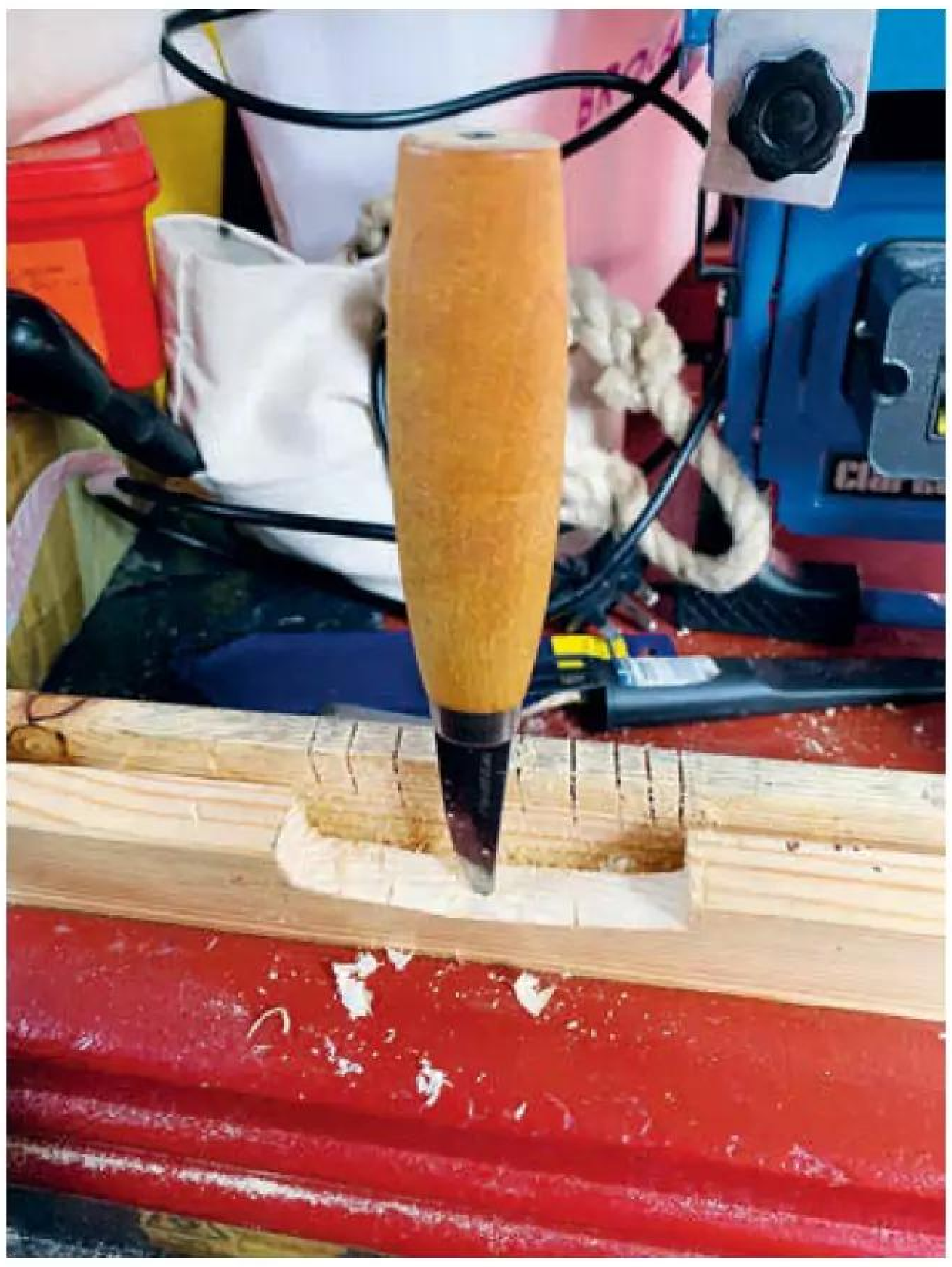


AFO: the seam up the middle of the prow, also probably providing some reinforcement, prompts yet another diversion into detail since the base rail must be carved to fit over it

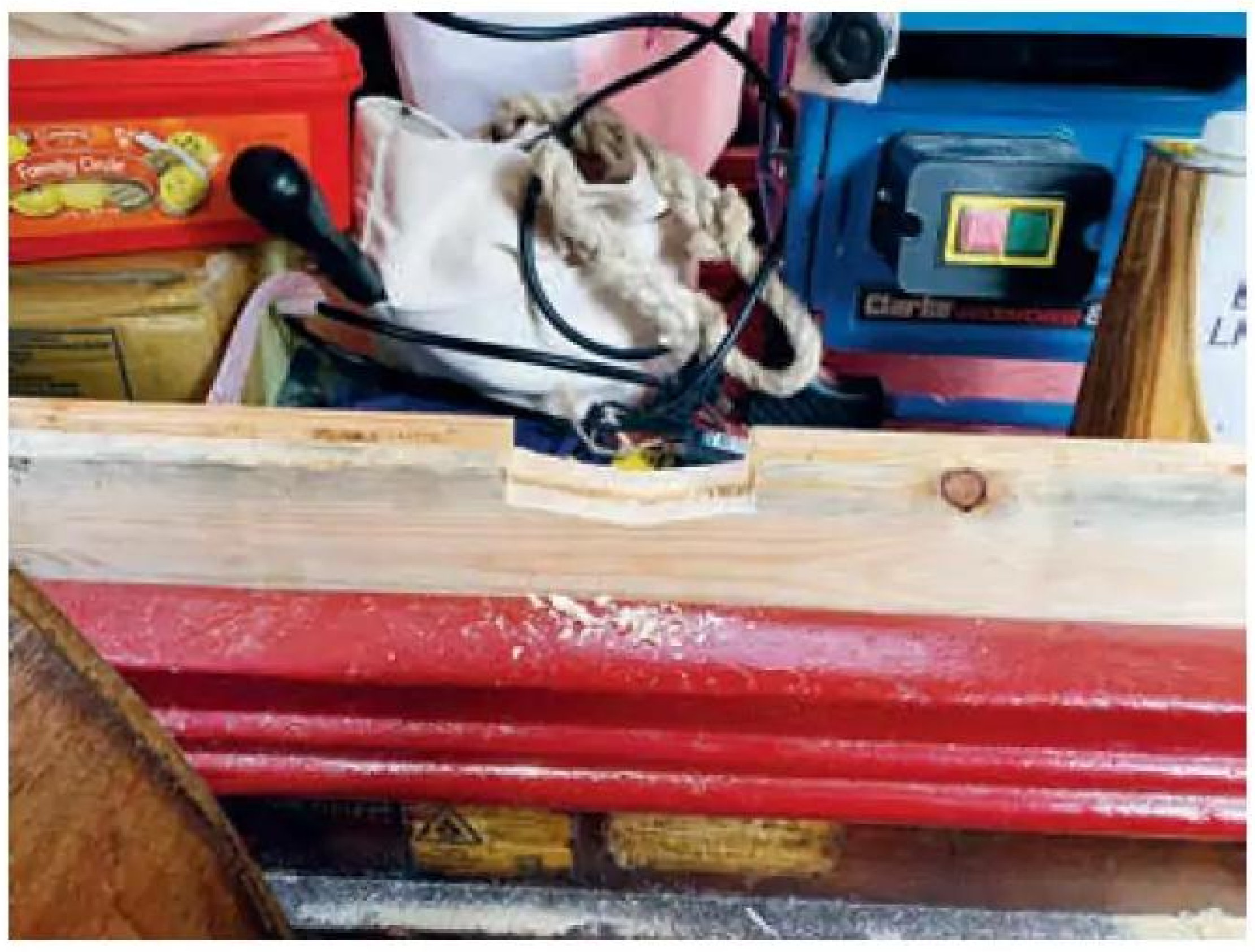
After making a paper template by snipping, folding, and then outlining, the shape was transferred to the exact centre point of the base rail



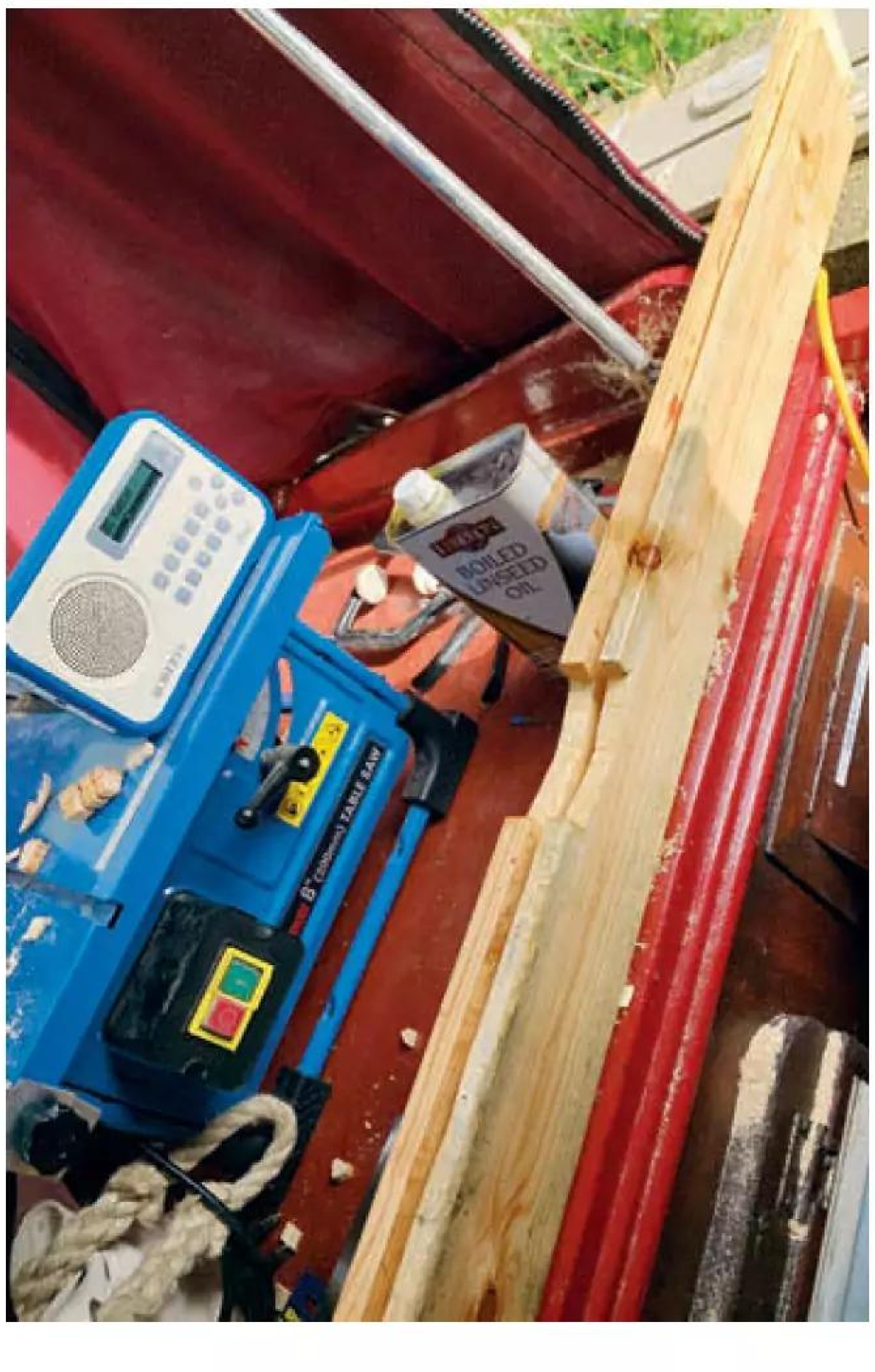
Slicing down to the profile with a fine saw, then chiselling out, I got the bulk of the wood removed



Swedish carving knives aren't just bearded hipster woodland craft accessories: they're absolutely the quickest way to get a fiddly profile carved into a big chunk of cheap wood



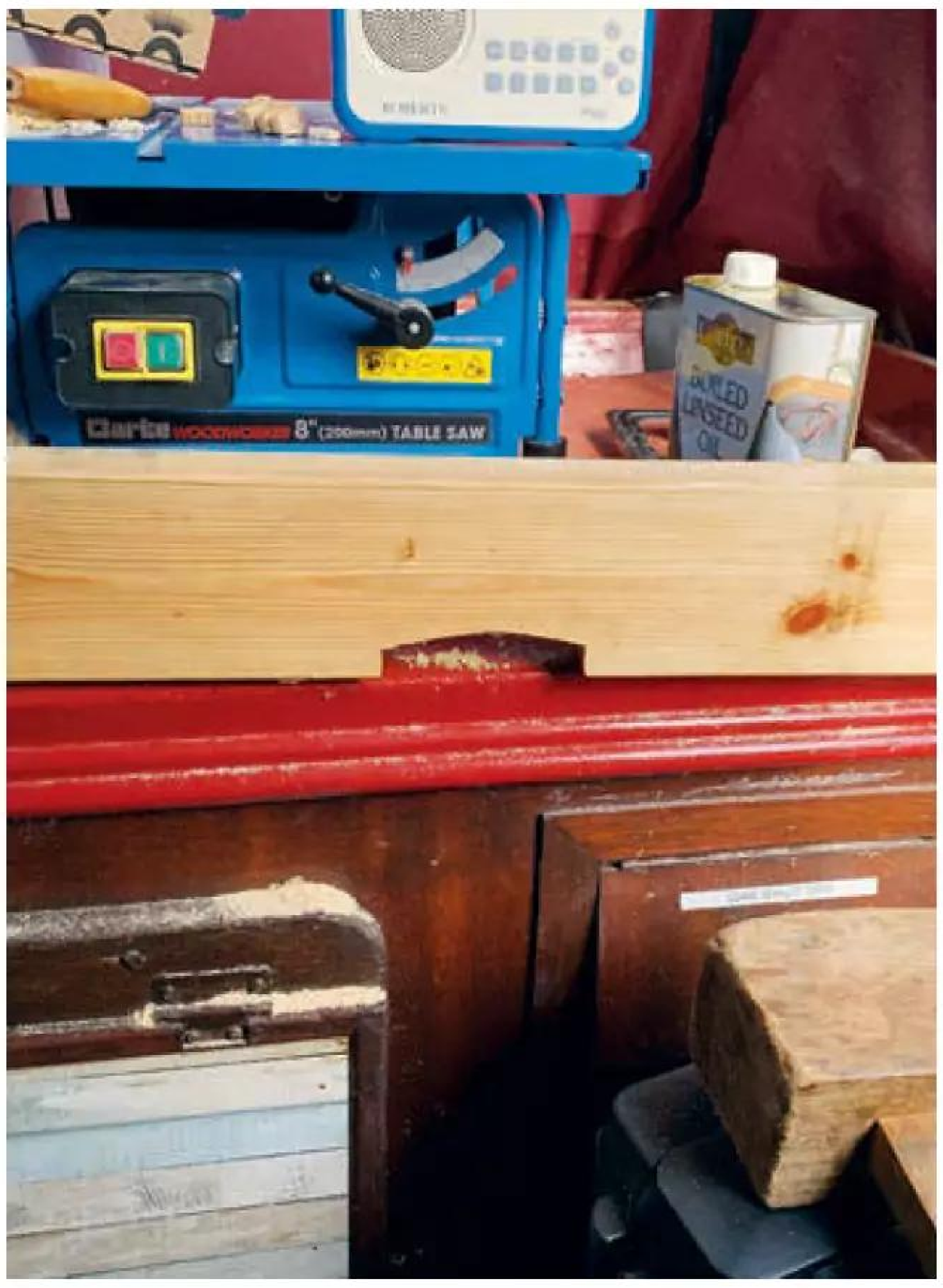
Carving done, ready for an absolute drenching in linseed oil



So what I was going to do with this toy was run it up the middle of a length of studding a few times, then chisel out the waste until I had my channel, giving me under two centimetres of wood sticking out on either side. The channel would be snug, yet wide enough not just to accommodate the 4-5mm thickness of upstanding steel, but to also allow for a slight curve, and most importantly, it would need to be wide enough to make full use of the expanding ferocity of the Gorilla glue I'd ultimately be using to fix it down securely, permanently, and water-repellently.

I cut and chiselled out the groove, then gave the piece several good licks of linseed oil, pouring it generously into the bottom of the channel to give it a good drenching. In fact, I returned to it with the oil several times, in between the bouts of roof supporting and rot demolition we've already suffered through together in the past two issues, re-soaking every time it was fully absorbed into the hungry wood, to the point where the surface was consistently translucent but touch dry. Once it was properly oily, I tossed it aside for a couple of weeks to finish the absorption process, and then returned to give it one last coat for luck – and to start the dry build.

And there it was: the next AFO, as I'm going to call them from now on. 'Another Flippin' Obstacle', that is. As soon as you fondly imagine you've dodged one, there it is: the AFO that will definitely be thoroughly tripping you up. It's nipped past you on the inside, and hides behind a low wall, waiting, sniggering, to ambush



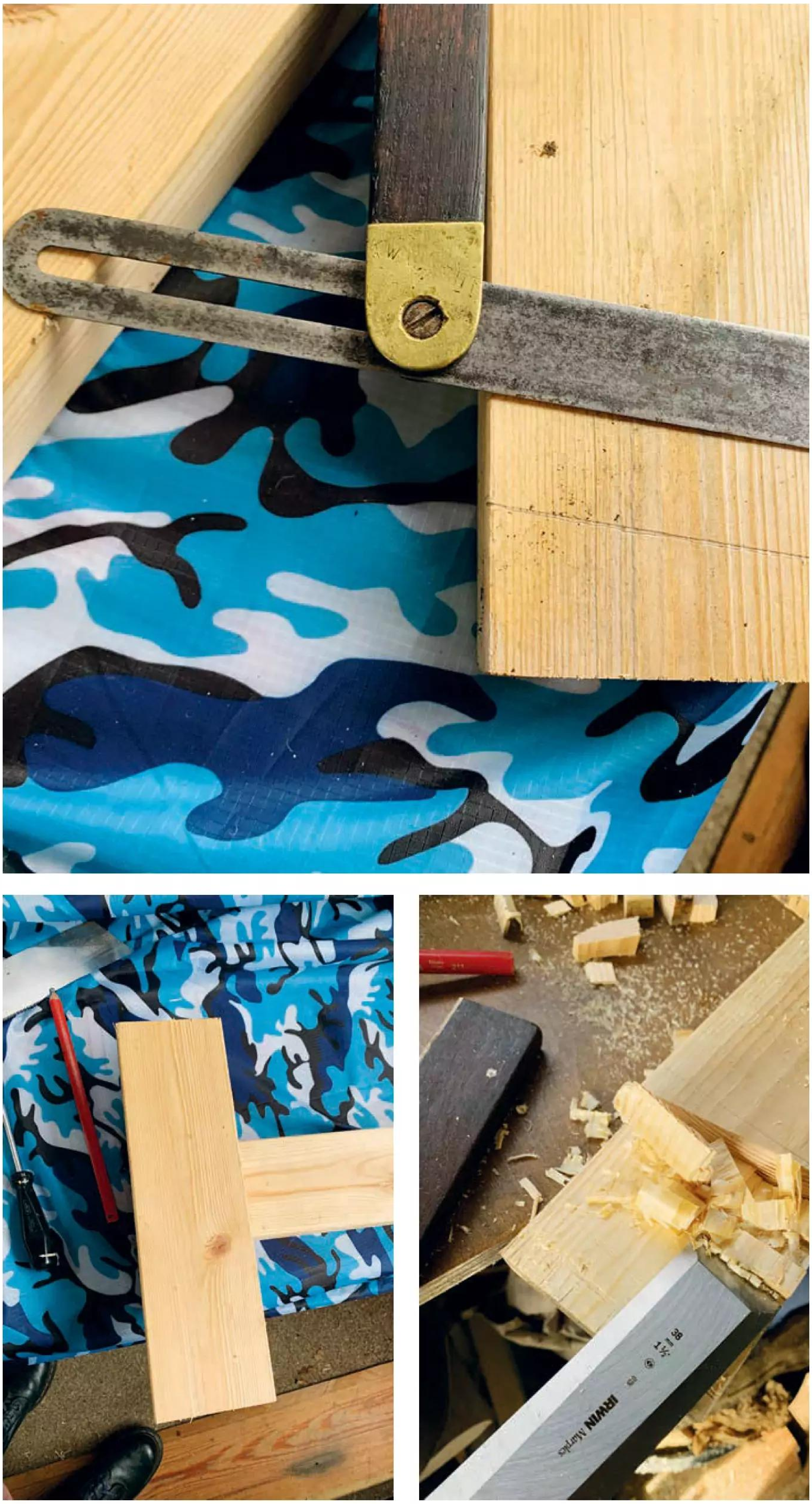
Carving done, drenching done, it's time to let the base rail really soak while I get the jointing on the uprights done you as soon as you think you're finally home and dry. Offering the base rail up to the hull, I realised I'd overlooked the great big seam up the centre of the prow, which was now keeping my carefully prepared timber teetering a good few centimetres above where it needed to be. Another flipping obstacle.

Using my measuring tape, I checked that the seam was indeed central, and marked the centre point of the timber. I then used a scrap of paper, snipped and folded, to get a rough template of the profile, folded it in half to get perfect symmetry, then trimmed and transferred that outline to the centre point of the bifurcated wood. My dad never had a Japanese Z saw, but he would have swapped his favourite tenon saw for one in an instant, even freshly sharpened, set, and oiled. They are ruddy marvellous. I cut a series of careful slices into the profile, exactly down to the template line, ensuring that the blade was exactly level so the profile was accurate right across the full 4cm of the wood.

Then, tapping gently to remove larger chunks, and using hand pressure only to make the more accurate slicing cuts, I took out the bulk of the timber with a big chisel and then used my little Swedish carving knife to smooth the line and clean up the rounded corners on that little kink at the top of the seam. I offered it up and it still didn't fit – but this was precisely why I'd decided to split the rail – and part of the reason for all that oil.

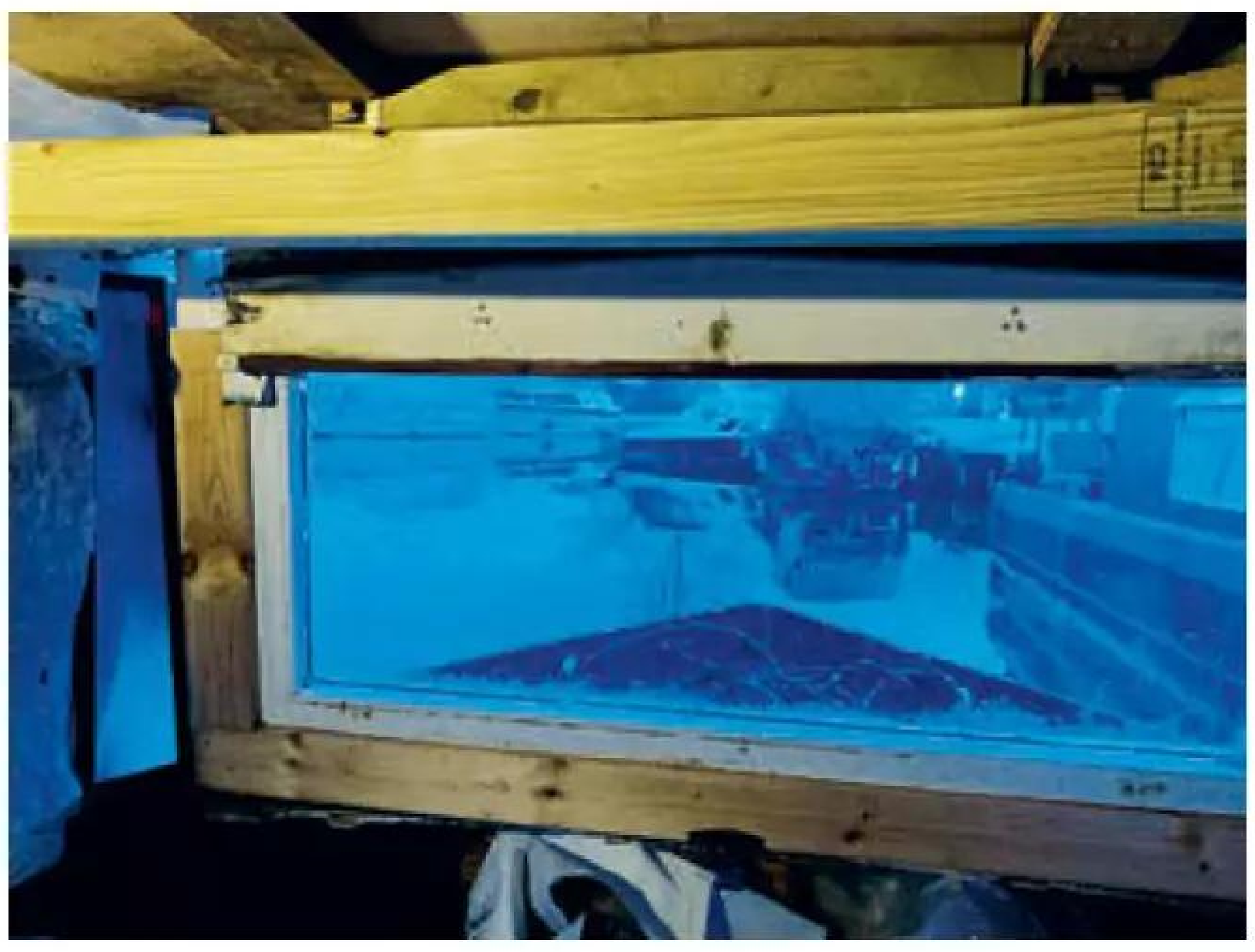
Linseed oil doesn't just protect the wood from penetrating moisture. It reduces the brittle dryness that comes with kiln drying – and so makes the wood a lot more flexible, rather like when it's freshly cut and green. I've used it to restore crumbling antique timber to full usability many times, on sash windows, turned handles and so on – but I'd never tried using it to actually modify new wood before, and certainly not construction timber. The imperceptible curve of the hull flange was so much greater than I originally thought, that the experiment really paid off: I would have destroyed that timber if I'd tried to bend it dry.

I usually prefer raw linseed oil for restoring things, because it's thicker and more nourishing – but for this job I'd picked boiled because it contains driers that speed up the process of application and reduce the oiliness of the surface once the oil's been drawn into the wood. I was going to glue the timber, and given the travelling I had to do every time I crept a couple of inches forward, the last thing I needed was to find I couldn't stick stuff



I started the bottom corner joints by getting the angle of lean set on the bevel gauge, then transferring that to the bottom of each upright. I then added the depth of the base rail and slid the gauge up so the angle just touched the highest point on one side. And yes, I remembered to cut the two pieces mirroring each other. I even surprised myself with that!

The folding galley table made a very handy place to clamp the uprights while I chomped at them, with the ends butted up against the closet wall. An excellent field workshop. the table disagreed though, as will be revealed...

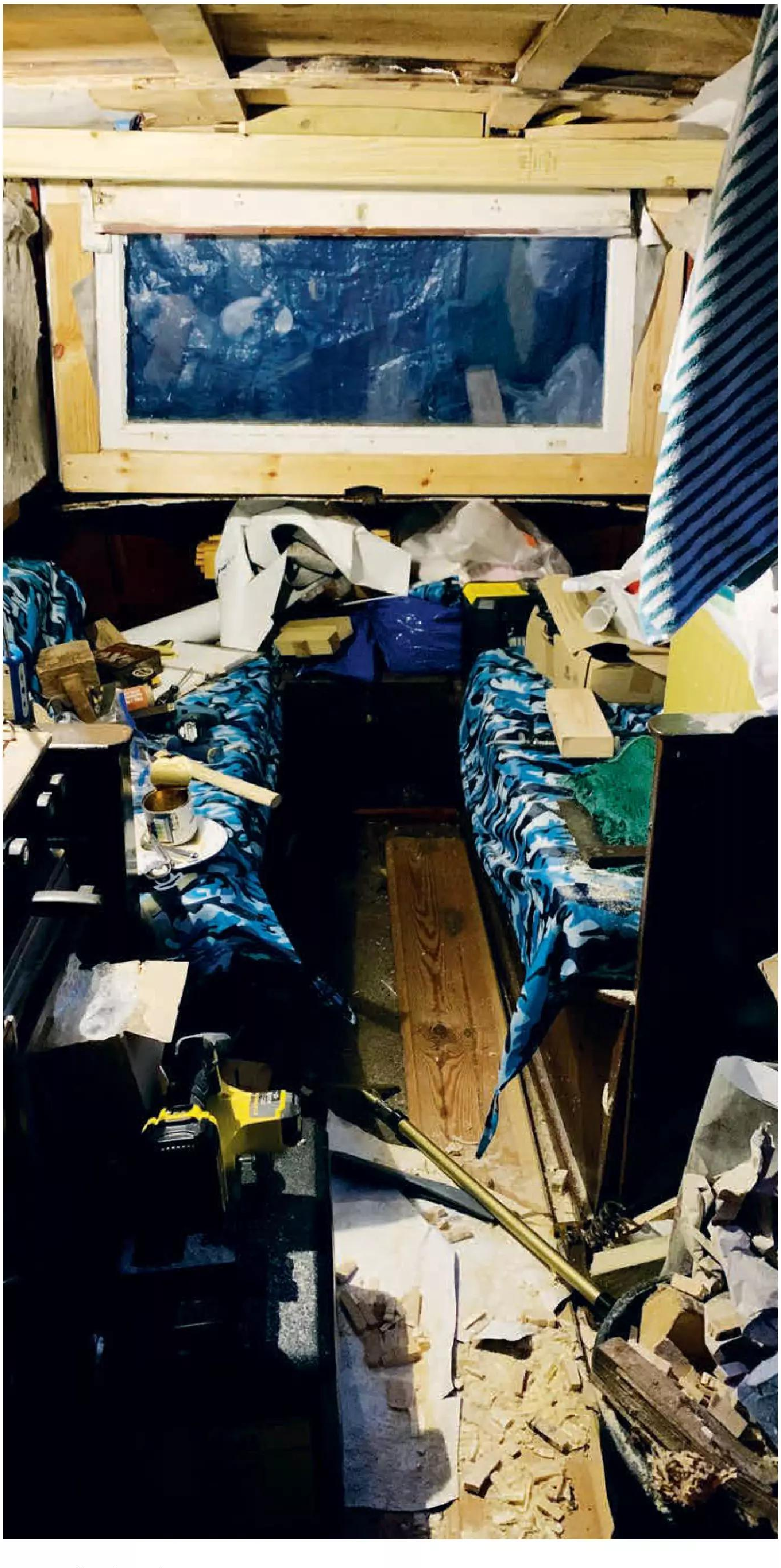


ABOVE: At last, a satisfactory corner has been turned. And if you can read the name on the vessel directly ahead? It's called 'Lazy Days'. And no. Not round here, they're not

BELOW: Uprights cut and screwed into place, AFO: the actual window is not symmetrical. So apart it all came, so the window corners could be individually measured and the joints recut. The difference was only a few millimetres on each side, so they were easily adjusted. But this is the whole point of the massive faff of a dry build. It's a lot less faff than having to knock the whole thing down when it's covered in glue!

when I needed to get the damn thing stuck. I centred the base rail on the hull, tapped one end down lightly with the mallet, then pulled on the other end, still tapping, until it suddenly popped onto that subtle front curve.

Knowing I might have to fight to remove it for the final full build, I gave it a few good bedding whacks and then checked it was completely removable and easy to level, ready to start measuring up for the uprights. These would be made from the emergency props I'd put in before I left it for the winter, with joints cut in to both these and the base rail, incorporating an

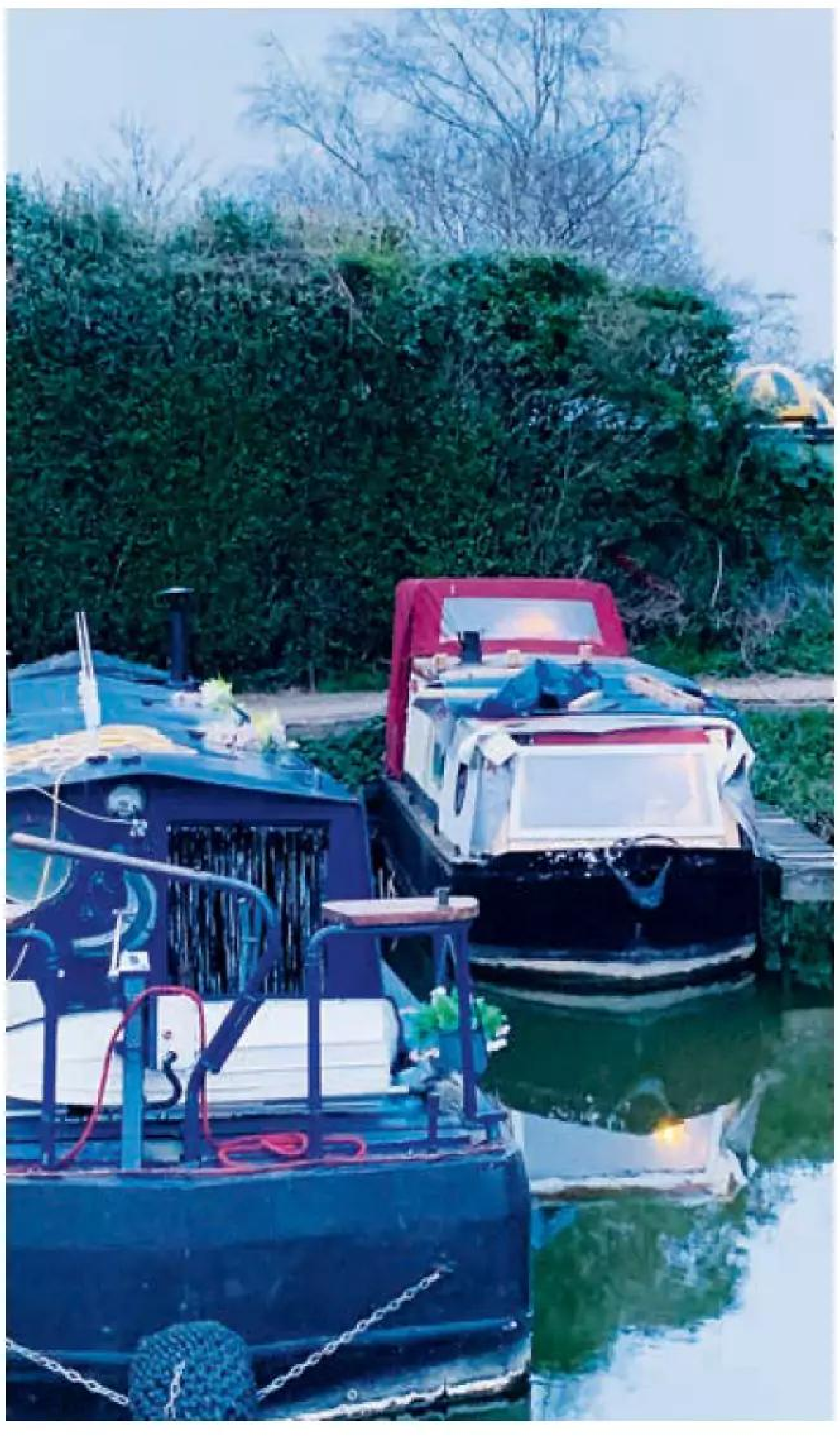


Front end bottom three rails all neatly measured, cut, screwed and tucked up for the night, ready for the next – and most sweat-inducing – stage: replacing the top rail and rehanging the heavy window. A neat and tidy front frame, yes: the cabin space not so much. I'll be having a bit of a tidy at some point... One day

allowance for the steel running up the middle, so joint cutting would again need a painstakingly accurate approach. Yay, go me.

It was quite amazing how all this was simply flowing back into my mind after decades of not going near constructional woodwork. The joints I would be making were 'halved joints'; somehow I already knew this, even though I'd last stood at my dad's side in his garage workshop when I was no older than twelve. 'Stopped housing joint' suddenly started popping up in my brain too, but I wasn't making any of those, so it must just have been that when he was teaching me as a kid I thought the name was cool. Which it is, obviously.

In the final build, the joints will be not only drilled and screwed, but pegged and glued too. But because I was dealing with a variety of subtle angles and joining the frame to other parts of the structure too, it was critical that at every step of the job I was accurate in my cutting, and that I checked and double-checked everything I



Just before the tarp goes over at the end of the latest adventure, and this is the first time it's looked anything like cosy. It was quite a pull to leave! But yeah, you've seen inside so...!

was doing. So, tediously, once each piece was cut and prepped for joining, it would only be screwed into place so it was all fully removable should I meet a snag down the track. It's a bit irritating knowing that what you're doing is only a dry build and you're going to have to take it all down again, but a lot less irritating than realising you've made a mess of the whole thing, you have to get the jemmy out, and then buy a load of new wood.

I offered the uprights up to the installed base rail, and marked on that where I was going to have to cut the joint. I bashed it off the hull again, cut the joints using the same technique of slicing and chiselling as before, then used the bevel gauge to mark the angle the uprights would need to lean at to accommodate the awkward parallelogram of the window before cutting them. I cut the depth of each half joint not exactly midway through the thickness of the timber, but factoring in the width of the flange and mounting glue that would be sandwiched between the two pieces of wood. By this point it was going swimmingly and I was starting to feel quite smug!

Obviously this was only until I reached AFO. Turns out the window isn't symmetrical! So I re-measured the angle of each bottom corner of the window individually instead, and recut each upright until it was a nice snug fit. I didn't bother correcting the 90° angle I'd cut on the base rail joints because I have some excellent two-part filler, and it'll all be concealed inside the finished structure anyway. Some bodges are alright – as long as they're small, and as long as they're mine!

And I need to get this frame finished – so I can finally get the roof done... CB

The weir I walk over on my way home from the job struck me as a good metaphor for the whole experience: on one side, all is placid, if a little scummy. On the other side? Hold onto your paddle and watch those foaming rocks!

FUN IN THE SUN

This year's 'Steam at the Lift' event was held over the weekend 10/11 May at the Anderton Boat Lift, Bob Weir reports. Cheshire was enjoying some warm sunshine, and a good time was had by all.

Steam and canals do go together and there was an excellent turnout of vintage steamboats and traction engines at this year's Steam at the Lift event. Visitors could also marvel at the magnificent Anderton Boat Lift and enjoy a cruise along the River Weaver on board the Edwin Clark Trip Boat.

The event was family-oriented with live demonstrations and interactive exhibits with plenty of old-world charm. A full programme had been planned for both days, including behind-the-scenes 'Walking the lift' tours; floating craft beer tasting; a 'make and take' Lego workshop for the youngsters; and to cap it all, a Real Ale Festival. Entrance to the site and visitor centre is free, although a small charge was made for some of the activities.

The 'Steam at the Lift' event is very popular

The lift is an engineering marvel of its time

The lift was used at a time when the Anderton basin was a major interchange for trans-shipping goods, with extensive warehousing, three double inclined planes and four salt chutes

Impressive view from the top of the lift

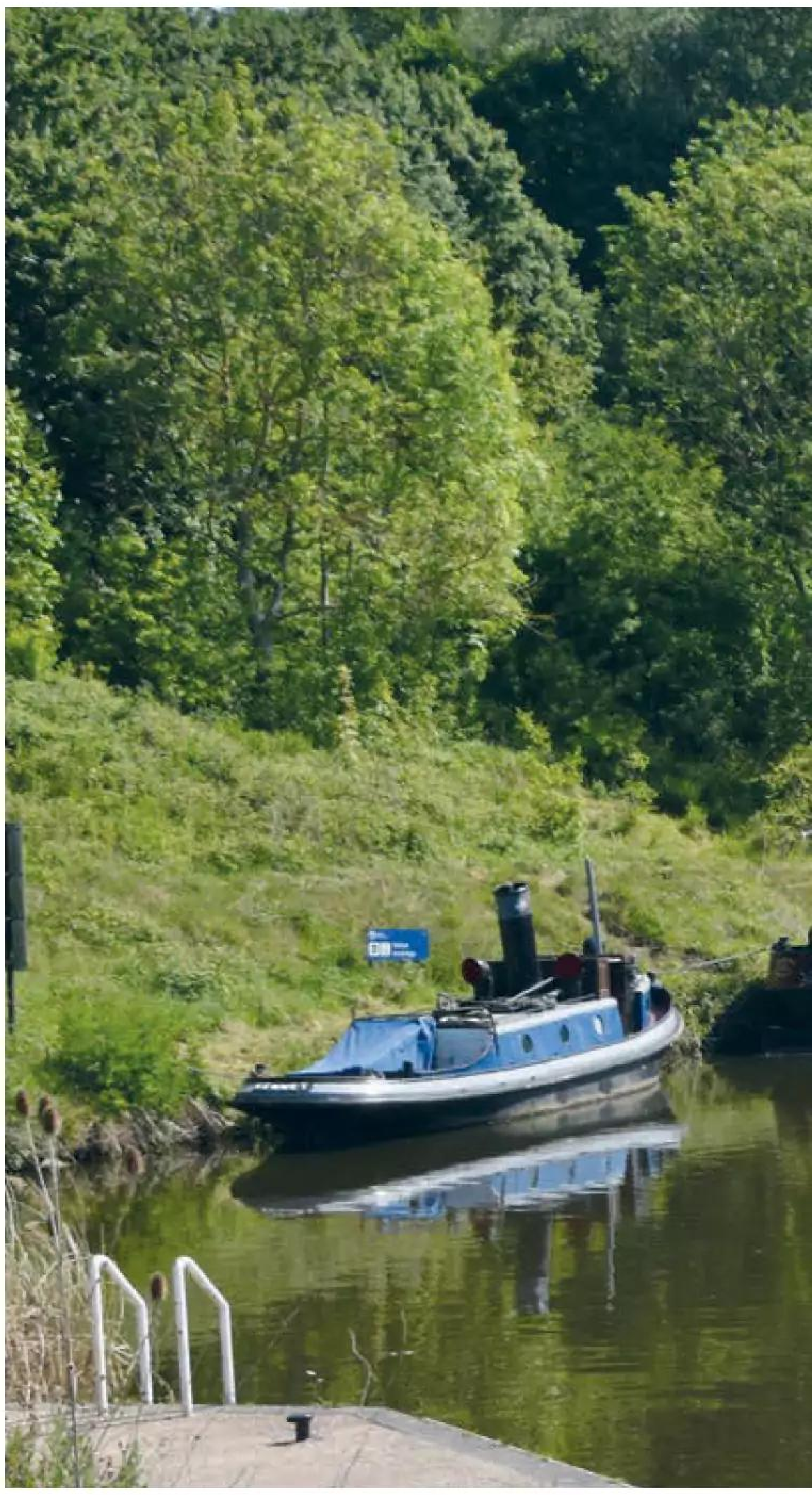
The resident boat operated by the Canal & River Boat Trust

Apart from the full-size steam engines, other attractions included Cheshire Live steamers' superb collection of miniatures. The Northwich Uke Club provided live music on the Saturday, and there was the impressive spectacle of the fleet leaving the basin to close Sunday afternoon.

For the technically minded, the Anderton Boat Lift is a two-caisson lift lock, providing a 50ft (15.2m) vertical link between the River Weaver and the Trent & Mersey Canal. It was built in 1875 and used for over a century, before closing in 1983 after concerns about corrosion. Restoration work started in 2001, and the boat lift was reopened the following year. The lift is closed for essential repairs in 2025 but is a Scheduled Monument, and widely known as one of the 'Seven Wonders of the Waterways'.

Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water
Boat Lift
Cheshire
The Canal & River Boat Trust public relations tent

The Daniel Adamson, or 'Danny', offers a steamship experience with a unique story. The ship was built at Cammell Laird in Birkenhead during 1903, and was originally called the Ralph Brocklebank after a director of the London and North Western Railway



A pleasant way to enjoy a sunny spring morning!

This mooring is right outside the Canal & River Boat Trust visitor centre

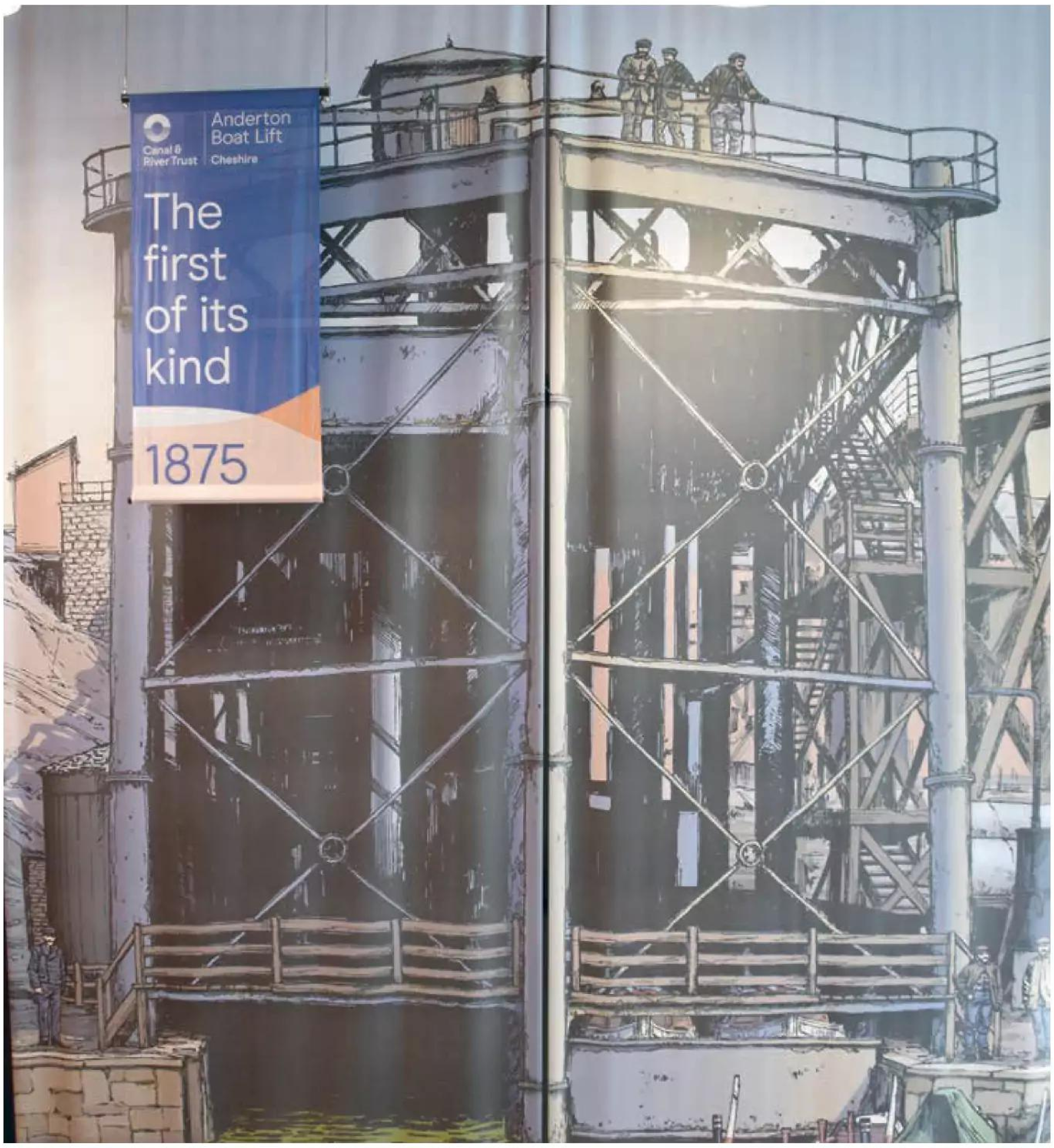
A relaxing cruise on the Trent & Mersey Canal

For the technically minded, the Anderton Boat Lift is a two-caisson lift lock, providing a 50ft (15.2m) vertical link between the River Weaver and the Trent & Mersey Canal.

A peaceful mooring on the River Weaver

VJ1476
Foden
GEORGE
RL 9960
U4222

Plenty of steam engines had turned up to join in the fun


Canal & River Trust
Anderton Boat Lift
Cheshire
The first of its kind
1875

This mural dominates the inside of the visitor centre

Saving the Lift

Part of the display inside the visitor centre

Although most visitors were happy to take advantage of the warm sunshine, the visitor centre is certainly worth a visit. This is operated by the Canal & River Trust and runs a number of superb exhibitions. The centre also has a coffee shop, play area, and is next to the Northwich Woodlands.

Further information
Anderton Boat Lift, Lift Lane, Anderton, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 6FW
Tel: 01606786777
Email: info@andertonboatlift.co.uk

FULL STEAM AHEAD

FOR THE BRAUNSTON HISTORIC NARROWBOAT RALLY & CANAL FESTIVAL

Tim Coghlan writes:

We are again holding our own very special annual canal event – the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally – in its regular slot over the last weekend in June. This year it's the 21st time we have hosted the event – so something to celebrate. We are now putting all the final preparations in place. With the threat to government funding, the waterways need to have something to celebrate – something to look forward to – and hopefully, this event will be a showcase for our wonderful waterways heritage.

We will also be celebrating the major restorations in recent years of the Narrowboat Trust's 'pair of boats', the motor Nuneaton and the butty Brighton – both thanks to generous legacy donations. And also the completion of the major restoration of the marina entrance's Horseley Ironworks bridge, thanks to a generous legacy donation by the late Peter Andrews.

We have invited Sir David and Lady Suchet to perform a 'Poirot double-act' for the opening of the Rally and the renaming of marina entrance bridge as 'Peter's Bridge'. They are both vice-presidents of the IWA and have each opened a variety of our rallies in past years – but never together!

For this year's opening, Sir David and Lady Suchet will both wear near-traditional boatmen's costume, with Sir David steering the motor Nuneaton, towing Lady Sheila on the Brighton – the traditional boatman husband and wife steering arrangement. They will proceed from the Grand Union Canal into the

REG AT DAVENTRY N
BLUE LINE CANA CAR
C.J.C.Co BRAUNSTON

David Suchet opening the 2018 Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally on the 1958 Braunston-built wooden butty Raymond. It was the last wooden narrowboat built for the English canals, and the Rally marked the 60th anniversary its launch. With David is Aubrey Berriman, shipwright who built the Raymond, and former working boat woman Alice Lapworth. (Harry Arnold – Waterways Images)

BRAUNSTON
HISTORIC BOAT SHOW
LAST WEEKEND IN JUNE

Lady Sheila Suchet opening the 2024 Rally onboard the Buckingham Canal Society's 'Diana the Dredger.' (Tim Coghlan)

marina pausing under the recently re-restored Horseley Ironworks Bridge. Pausing there, they will firstly rename the bridge – unveiling its new plaque – and then jointly declare the 2025 Rally open. For this challenging navigational task, the Suchets will have a little help from members of the Narrowboat Trust, of which I have the honour to be patron.

We have already received an encouraging number of early bookings, 70 so far – and they just keep coming. This could well be a vintage year, especially with the number of butties, which could reach a record. These leviathans of our canal-carrying past are the making of the Rally, which, has for some years now, will probably be the largest gathering of them anywhere on the waterways.

The Rally was originally conceived late in 2002, to celebrate the completion of the then major restoration works to the steam narrowboat President, with the first Rally being held in June 2003. Narrowboats deteriorate in a water environment, and require regular maintenance, especially when old and steam-powered. President ran into trouble again in early 2019 when its boiler was condemned, requiring a new boiler and associated works. Besides the £80,000 needed, there was also the problem of finding a manufacturer to build it. Once, there were hundreds of these boiler manufacturers across the UK, but now only a handful remain. The other problem has been the spec. and finding an engineering design company able and willing to produce one. While it is hoped that President will be back in steam later this year, it will sadly again not make our Rally, where it has always proved a major attraction.

In the spirit of the original IWA Market Harbour Rally of 1950 – being commemorated in its 75th anniversary this year (see our news story, page 12) – our event has always been a double act going hand in hand with its Canal Festival. Our music-impresario for some years now, Janul, is already networking

Nuneaton & Brighton in the parade of boats at the 2022 Rally. The pair of boats will open the 2025 Rally with Sir David and Lady Sheila Suchet formally performing it. (Tim Coghlan)

NA OW BOAT T
AL CARRY

Job done: After the formal opening, Lady Sheila Suchet relaxing with members of the Narrow Boat Trust. (Tim Coghlan)

An historic narrowboat enthusiastic polishing up his brasses before the first parade. (Tim Coghlan)

A whole armful of historic narrowboats in the Old Oxford Canal Arm at Braunston Marina. (Tim Coghlan)

Arriving at the slipway, 'Reclaim' nudges her into position

Bridge over Oxford Canal Waters. The 'Three Idle Women' who will be making their debut performance at the 2025 Rally. (Photo supplied)

Morris Dancers galore. (Victoria Jane Photography)

Mr Punch delighting young and not-so-young visitors. (Victoria Jane Photography)

DIAMOND.CO.UK
PUNCH & JUDY
FACIAT EAM

the amazing musicians she produces each year for the famous beer tent – the Dry Dock Inn – a mini-Glastonbury, without the mud.

There will be Morris Dancers, and children will again be entertained by Professor Diamond's Punch & Judy Show in four productions during the Saturday.

There will also be the The Guild of Waterways Artists provided with their own marquee, sponsored by Braunston Marina. At least ten of its members will have their works on display, including the great canal artist Dusty Miller.

For many years now, we have enjoyed hosting Alarum Theatre with their new productions on the Thursday nights before the Rally. The duo of Kate Saffin and Heather Wastie have now decided to call it a day. But on Kate's recommendation we have invited the new Oxford Canal-based trio, the Three Idle Woman, who will be preforming a number of their close-harmony canal song – 'All Hands Together'. Their CD will be available for purchase on the night at £10. Tickets at £10 – no concessions – are available beforehand from the marina shop and from the door on the night. The event is sponsored by Braunston Marina and all ticket sales will be donated to the maintenance of Braunston Church, the 'Cathedral of the Canals' – where many former working boatmen 'tied up' for the last time.

The Best Bar None team with Pete Waterman at the 2023 Rally. (Tim Coghlan)

And mentioning Kate Saffin, she will still be very much with us for the Rally. On her suggestion, she will dress as a traditional boat woman, and be 'at home' in an old working boatman's cabin tied up in the Old Oxford Arm at the heart of the marina. Here she will show visitors round the cabin, explaining to them the mysteries of just how the boatmen's families managed to live and work in such a confined space – what they wore, ate, how they slept, and the tough life they led.

The Rally will also have its usual trade marquee, which will be shared with a number of canal societies. At least two canal authors are hoping to launch their new books in that tent. Outside, there will be a number of good causes like the RNLI, to whom we give free space.

On the Sunday evening, to close the event, the Rally will again sponsor a candle-lit choral concert by Fiori Musicali of Elizabethan and early Jacobean music. The venue is across the meadows from Braunston at the ancient church of Wolfhampcote. The concert aims to raise awareness of this redundant church and the funds needed for its preservation.

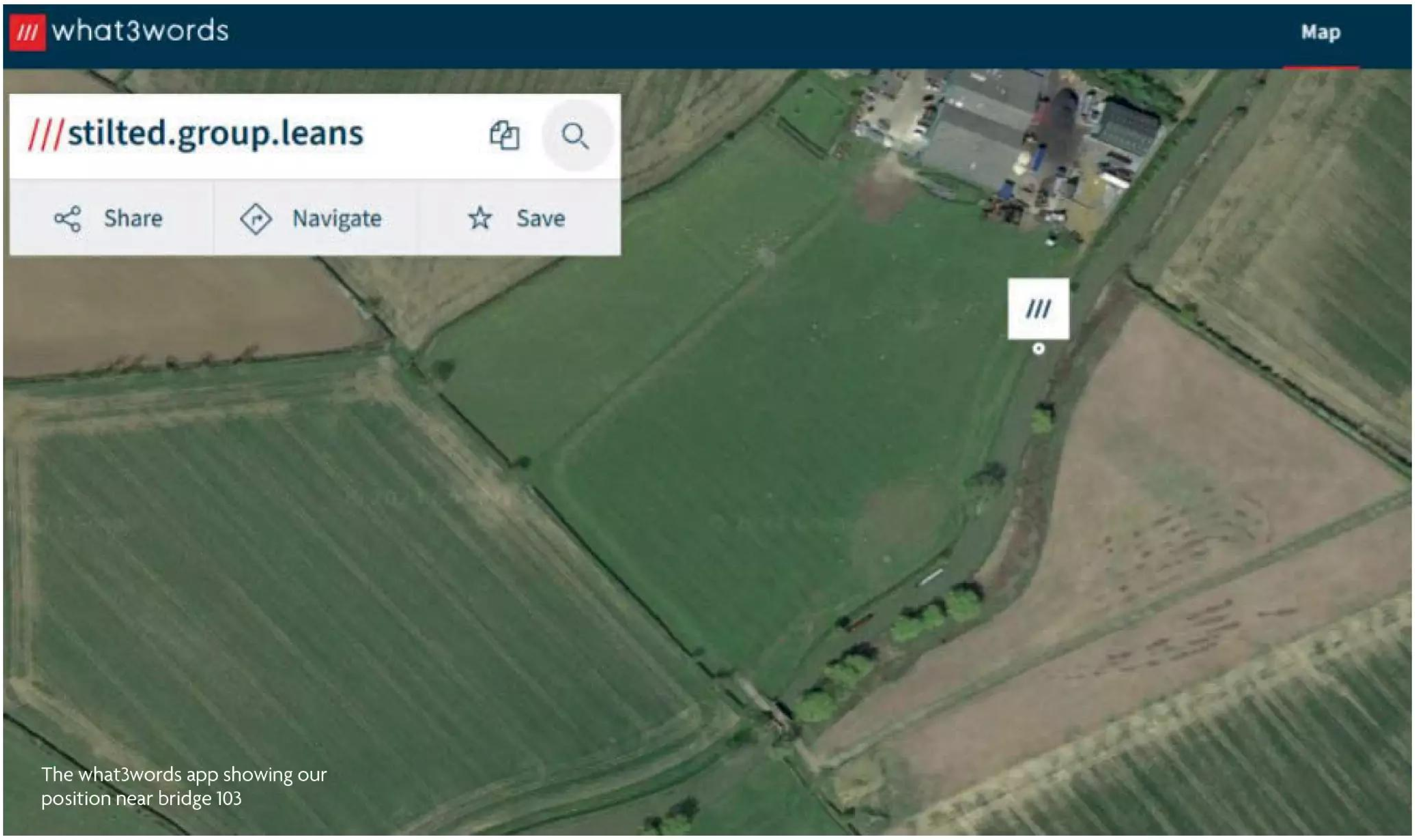
We are fortunate to be able to hold the event in our marina, including parking, with use of the canal outside for the parades of historic narrowboats, thanks to the CRT. The Rally is very much an outdoor event, with some five thousand people who traditionally attend, spreading themselves out along the mile or so of towpath to watch the parades. So we should be able to hold the event in safety. Here's hoping we have you onboard!

The Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally is sponsored by Braunston Marina, with support from the Canal & River Trust. CB

What the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally is all about! (Eamonn Comerford)

WHAT3WORDS SAVED MY LIFE

A slightly unusual title for a canal article, but, it is completely true. Whilst we can sometimes be critical of technology and the amount of confusing Apps on our modern phones, on this occasion it turned out to be a lifesaver



The what3words app showing our position near bridge 103

We are Martin and Julie, we are the owners of NB Ruby Louise, a 60ft Colecraft Narrowboat, and we are also probably better known as the owners of Julie's Jugs Canal Art. We spend most of the season trading from our boat on the Oxford and Grand union canals. We often trade around the Braunston area and run Canal Rose painting courses. We have been boating and involved with our great canal network for almost 40 years.

Last year on Friday 5 July to be precise, we set out from our mooring at Ventnor Marina on a casual cruise towards Braunston as we intended to have a bit of a 'quiet' weekend after a few weeks trading.

JULIE'S JUGS
OPEN
CANAL ART

Back to trading April 2025, back to the brushes and the 'New Normal'

Accompanying us, was NB Rhiannon, a narrowboat which we used to own, and now belongs to our good friends Eddy and Chris Mayhew. Our intended stop for the night was Bridge 102 on the South Oxford, but as we approached bridge 103 which is a popular spot for moorers, we found plenty of space so decided to cut the journey short, it's a great mooring with plenty of good views and it's nice and quiet. The weather on the Saturday was pretty good so we decided to stay put until the Sunday. Eddy and Chris were in agreement so we spent the day doing boat jobs, polishing brass, drinking tea and watching the plethora of hire boats which use that stretch. Nothing untoward so far....

I awoke at 1am Sunday morning with what I thought was indigestion, sometimes sleeping in a 4ft double bed can be a bit uncomfortable and cramped so I really did not take much notice. It subsided in about 30 minutes, at that point I drifted off back into the land of nod.

At 3.30am I woke up again, once more with indigestion, but this did not feel the same, the dull ache built in waves to the point of feeling nauseous, then subsided and started again, and at that point I lost the feeling in my left arm. As a trained first aider I should have recognised the signs of what was now happening, but I thought to myself, 'it must be just something I have eaten, this cannot be anything more serious, after all I am only 56!'.

By this time Julie was awake, she dialled 111 for advice, that quickly turned into a 999 call.

The next question which was asked of us was 'what is your location? Postcode? House Number?' None of that applies when you are in the middle of nowhere on a boat. Anyone who has moored at 103 will be familiar with its isolation apart from a farm over the hedge, which at that time in the morning was pretty deserted.

Luckily, at this point nearly doubled up in pain, I remembered that my work phone had the What3words app on it, this App divides the world into 3m x 3m squares, and allocates each square with a unique code made up of 3 random words. It's very simple to use, Julie opened the app, it then plotted our location using GPS and displayed the code for our location.

Ours was 'stilted/group/leans'...

The App is free to download to your phone, look for it in your play or App store on your phone.

Twenty minutes later, we received a call from paramedics who were now at Bridge 102 with an ambulance, and could not get any closer to us. Ironically, if the moorings at 103 had been occupied, we would have been moored at 102 anyway! The only way to get to us was for them to walk back down the canal towpath to bridge 103 in the dark carrying all their equipment. It's about a mile, so it took them a good 20 minutes to arrive. Diagnosis at that point, was multiple heart attacks, so the next conundrum was how to get me either back to the ambulance or to a hospital. I remember a conversation regarding the fire brigade, or alternatively, a helicopter, one of the paramedics even considered taking the ambulance into the field next to the canal. All this head scratching was going on while I was sat in bed wired up to a holdall full of equipment which kept bleeping and shouting at me.

It was then suggested to take me by boat to the ambulance. Julie went and woke up Eddy and Chris on NB Rhiannon, which was moored behind us. I was then moved by the paramedics from our boat to theirs, which was an assisted walk of only about 60 feet, but left me completely out of breath, dizzy, in pain and unable to move.Chris Mayhew told me after the event that I was completely lacking colour at this point.

So off we went, in the dark, Eddy helming the boat, assisted by Chris, me slumped in the saloon on a sofa with two paramedics and an array of medical equipment and

NB Ruby Louise

Our boat NB Ruby Louise moored in the exact spot that the incident occurred

Boat friends together L-R Eddy Mayhew, Chris Mayhew, myself, Julie Pritchard

NB Rhiannon

monitors to which I was attached, and a defibrillator. When we got to bridge 103 I was more or less carried to the ambulance. What happened to the boats after that was a long way from my mind. I was on my way to hospital, at break neck speed with the paramedics. Julie had stayed with the boat and the dogs. Being thrown about in the back of a speeding ambulance with my head filled with sirens and blue lights was not the way I had expected the weekend to finish.

The result of this tale was surgery and stents at Coventry University Hospital, it turns out that the artery that fed my heart was 98% blocked. The diagnosis was coronary heart disease.

I was advised afterwards by the consultant, that something had happened in the ambulance on the way to Coventry Hospital cardiac unit. I do not remember much about the trip to be honest, but had I not been in the company of paramedics at that point I would have died.

If it had not been for the What3words app, they would probably not have got to me in time, the general consensus of the cardiac team was, that I probably only had about another 30 minutes.

It's a sobering conversation when you are made aware of that...

I was oblivious to what happened for the rest of the day regards the boats, as I sat in a hospital bed in the cardiac unit, wondering when I would wake up to discover the whole episode had been a dream. As I looked round the ward at the assembled patients, I thought to myself, "I don't know why they have put me in here, its full of old boys with heart problems."

It took me several days to come to terms with the fact that I was now one of them, and also I was not the youngest patient either! NB Rhiannon, after dropping me off, had been taken on to Braunston to turn and then returned to bridge 103, NB Ruby Louise was then taken by Eddy to Braunston, turned and brought back to 103. Now both were facing the same direction, both boats then returned to Ventnor Marina together, our NB helmed by Eddy Mayhew, NB Rhiannon helmed by Chris Mayhew, I think it's fair to say that Julie was in no fit state to helm a boat anywhere. It is at crisis times like these that the boating community show their best side, we are eternally grateful to Eddy and Chris for their help, numerous other boaters on hearing the news also rallied round to make sure that Julie was ok, and to ask ifanything could be done to help the situation. I was kept in hospital until the Wednesday when I returned to the boat before travelling home to Suffolk. Julie stayed with the boat during the time I was in hospital and was looked after by the staff at the marina, who again were fantastic.

We returned to the boat after a couple of months, I was very wary of taking her out to be honest, and passing the moorings at 103 and the road bridge 102 for the first time was a bit of an emotional moment. I am now also acutely aware of speeding ambulances on blue lights, which before this event I did not really give much of a thought to the seriousness of where they were going, or who may be inside.

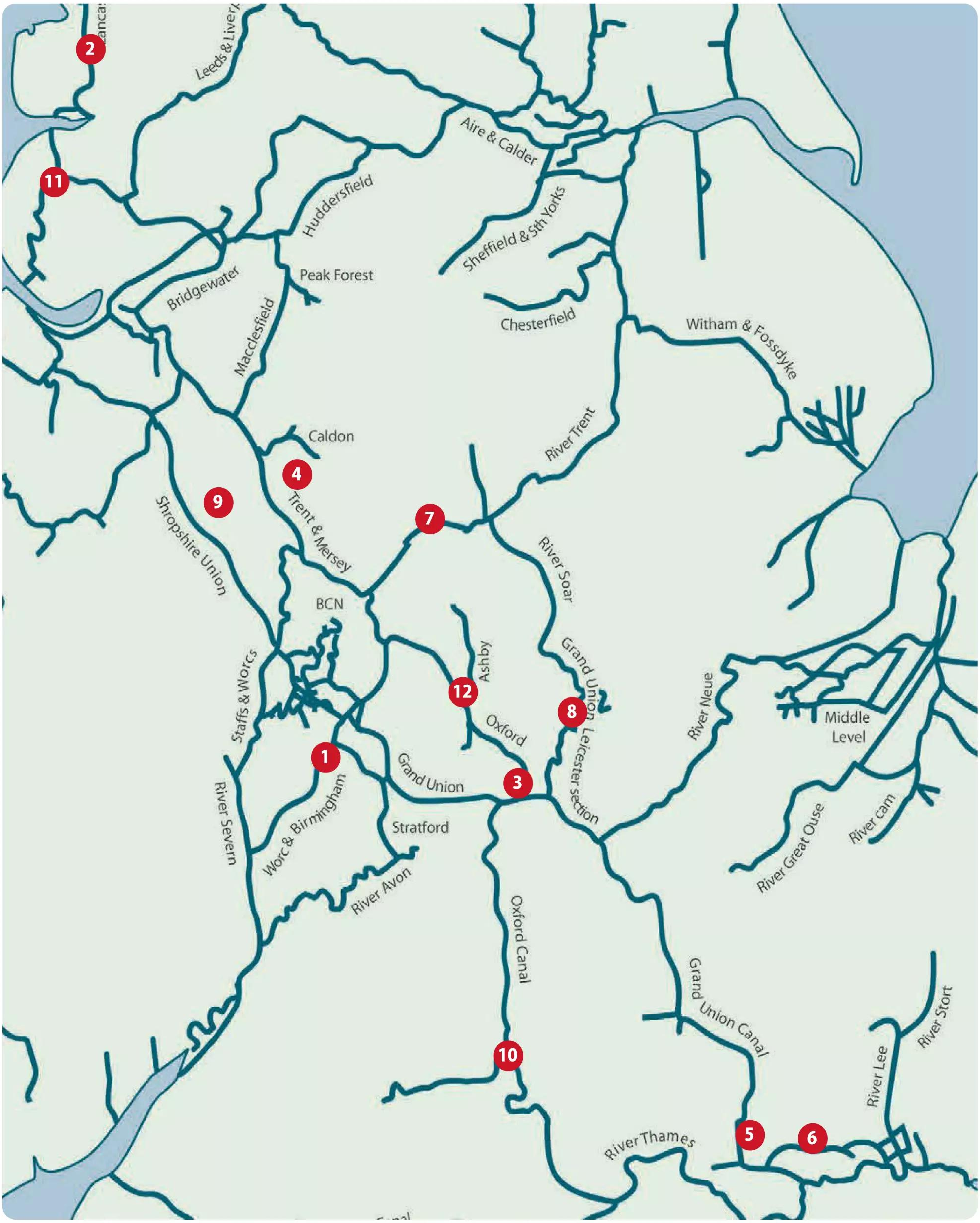
If this has taught me anything, it's that life changing events can happen to any of us, at any time. We all know that phone networks can be a bit hit and miss, and that sometimes we like the isolation of a remote mooring, but a little thought about how you would cope in an emergency is worth contemplating.

Sometimes you cannot prepare for these things, but by knowing your location and being conscious of how, if needed, you can summon help, may save your own, or someone else's life.

Download the App, it's free...

So after nearly 10 months of cardiac rehabilitation, hospital visits, doctor's appointments and ECG scans, I am back to what I now call the 'new normal'. We are out trading again, although not as intensively as we were. Life is a bit slower and a bit less stressful, which to be honest is a good thing. My thanks must also go to Warwickshire Ambulance Service, Coventry University Hospital Cardiac Unit, and British Heart Foundation Cardiac Rehabilitation team.

Here's to a good 2025 boating season for us all, stay safe and be prepared. CB


2
Leeds & Liverp
11
Aire & Calder
Huddersfield
Sheffield & Sth Yorks
Peak Forest
Bridgewater
Macclesfield
Chesterfield
Witham & Fossdyke
Caldon
4
River Trent
9
7
Trent & Mersey
Shropshire Union
River Soar
BCN
Ashby
Grand Union Leicester section
Staffs & Worcs
12
8
Oxford
River Neue
Middle Level
1
Grand Union
3
River Severn
Worc & Birmingham
Stratford
River Avon
River Great Ouse
River cam
Oxford Canal
Grand Union Canal
River Stort
10
River Lee
River Thames
5
6

To advertise on these pages contact our sales team at: **catherine@talk-media.uk**

BOATYARDS & SERVICES **DIRECTORY**

1 ABC LEISURE GROUP

S	D	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	**Coe**	**C**
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	**Br**	Hs	Boh	**BB**	**M**
WD	**Ch**	**T**	**Se**	**Bh**	**Dh**	**H**	**Pl**	**W**

Repairs, Servicing and Marina.
Facilities at ten UK destinations.

Tel: 0330 3330 595
www.abclg.com

2 BRIDGE HOUSE MARINA

S	D	**B**	Di	**A**	**G**	Po	**Coe**	**C**
An	**DIY**	P	**R**	**Br**	**Hs**	**Boh**	**BB**	**M**
WD	**Ch**	**T**	**Se**	**Bh**	**Dh**	**H**	**Pl**	**W**

Nateby Crossing Lane, Garstang,
Nr Preston, Lancashire PR3 0JJ

Tel: 01995 603207
www.bridgehousemarina.co.uk

3 CALCUTT BOATS LTD

S	D	**B**	**Di**	A	**G**	**Po**	Coe	**C**
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	**Br**	Hs	**Boh**	BB	**M**
WD	**Ch**	T	**Se**	**Bh**	**Dh**	**H**	**Pl**	**W**

Tomlow Road, Stockton,
Southam CV47 8HX

Tel: 01926 813757
Fax: 01926 814091
www.calcuttboats.com

4 CANAL CRUISING CO LTD

S	**D**	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	Coe	**C**
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	Br	Hs	Boh	BB	M
WD	Ch	T	**Se**	**Bh**	Dh	H	**Pl**	**W**

We have three dry docks, cranage can be arranged. Crown Street, Stone, Staffs ST15 8QN

Tel: 01785 813982
Email: kwyatt5745@aol.com
www.canalcruising.co.uk

5 DENHAM YACHT STATION LTD

S	D	B	**Di**	A	**G**	**Po**	Coe	C
An	DIY	P	R	**Br**	Hs	Boh	BB	**M**
WD	**Ch**	T	Se	Bh	Dh	**H**	Pl	W

100 Acres, Sanderson Road
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1NB

Tel: 01895 239811
Email: denhamarina@msn.com
Web: www.denham-marina.co.uk

6 HIGHLINE YACHTING

S	D	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	Coe	**C**
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	**Br**	Hs	Boh	BB	M
WD	Ch	T	Se	Bh	Dh	**H**	Pl	W

Boat Safety Scheme examinations.
Corgi registered fitters.
All services for the narrowboat owner.
Mansion Lane, Iver, Bucks SL0 9RG

Tel: 01753 653151

7 MERCIA MARINA

S	**D**	B	**Di**	A	G	**Po**	Coe	**C**
An	DIY	P	**R**	**Br**	Hs	Boh	BB	**M**
WD	**Ch**	T	**Se**	**Bh**	Dh	H	Pl	W

Findern Lane, Willington,
Derbyshire DE65 6DW

Tel: 01283 703332
Email: info@merciamarina.co.uk
www.merciamarina.co.uk

8 NORTH KILWORTH WHARF

S	D	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	Coe	**C**
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	**Br**	Hs	Boh	**BB**	**M**
WD	Ch	T	Se	Bh	Dh	**H**	Pl	W

Station Road, North Kilworth,
Lutterworth, Leics, LE17 6JB

Tel: 01858 881723
Email: northkilworthwharf@tiscali.co.uk

9 OVERWATER MARINA

S	D	B	**Di**	A	**G**	**Po**	Coe	C
An	**DIY**	**P**	**R**	**Br**	Hs	Boh	BB	**M**
WD	**Ch**	T	Se	**Bh**	Dh	H	Pl	W

Coole Lane, Newhall near Audlem,
Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8AY

Tel: 01270 812677
Email: info@overwatermarina.co.uk
www.overwatermarina.co.uk

10 OXFORD CRUISERS LTD

S	D	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	Coe	**C**
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	Br	Hs	Boh	BB	**M**
WD	Ch	T	Se	Bh	Dh	H	Pl	W

The Boat Centre, Eynsham,
Witney, Oxon OX29 4DA

Tel: 01865 881698
Fax: 01865 880056
Email: oxfordscruisers@aol.com

11 SCARISBRICK MARINA

S	D	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	**Coe**	**C**
An	**DIY**	**P**	**R**	**Br**	**Hs**	**Boh**	**BB**	**M**
WD	Ch	T	**Se**	Bh	Dh	H	Pl	W

Scarisbrick Marina has moorings for up to 200 boats and enjoys access to over 20 miles of lock free cruising on the Leeds Liverpool Canal.

Tel: 01704 841924
Web: www.scarisbrickmarina.com

12 SPRINGWOOD HAVEN LEISURE

S	D	**B**	**Di**	**A**	**G**	**Po**	Coe	C
An	DIY	**P**	**R**	Br	Hs	Boh	**BB**	**M**
WD	**Ch**	T	**Se**	Bh	Dh	H	Pl	W

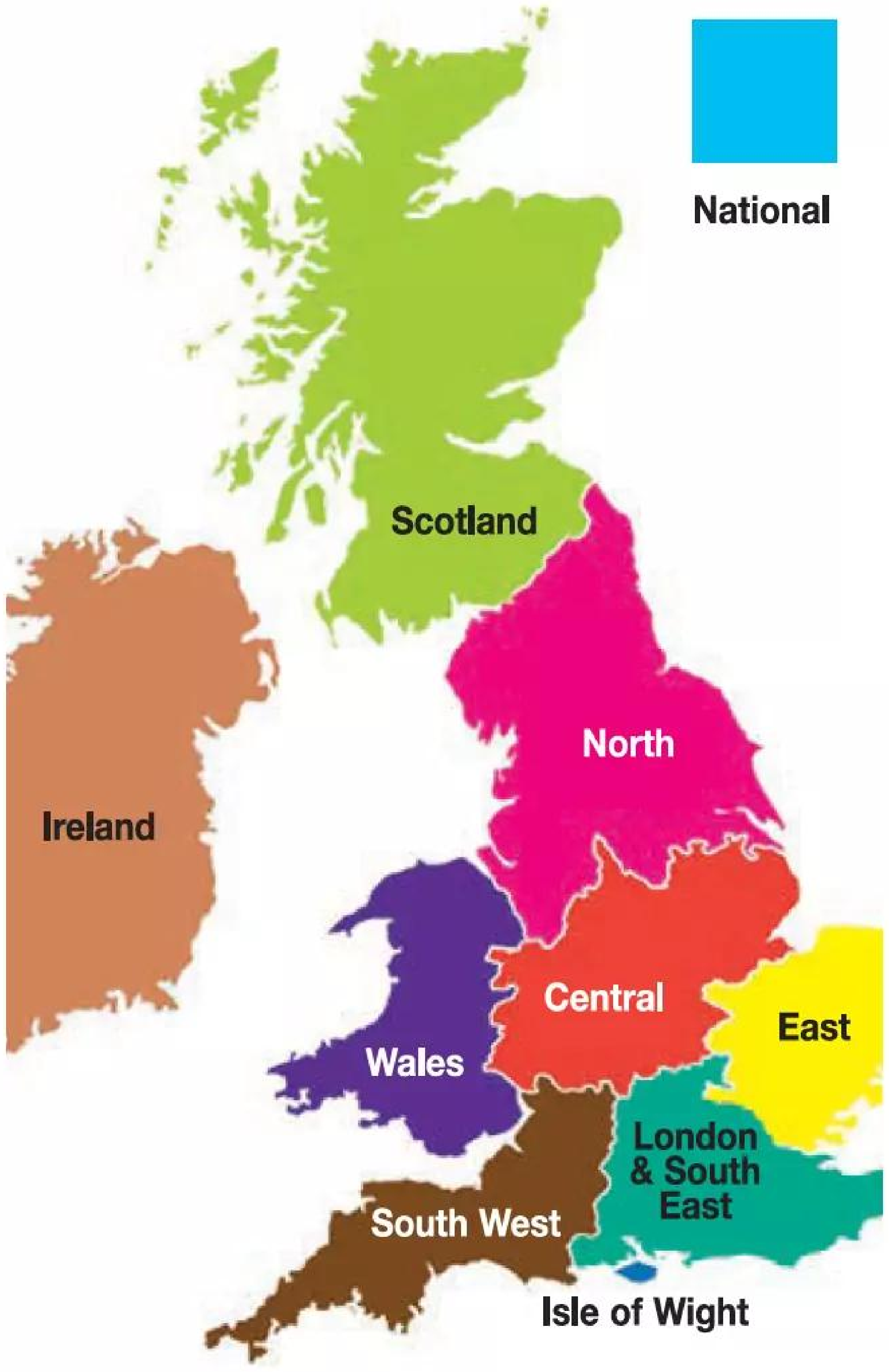
Including Onboard Energy - Specialist in electrical equipment inc Solar Panels.
Bridge 27, Coventry Canal.
Tel: 02476 393676
Email: enquiries@onboardenergy.com
www.springwoodhaven.co.uk

KEY TO SERVICES

S	SLIPWAY	Coe	CALL OUT ENGINEER	Hs	HARD-STANDING	Se	SERVICING
D	DRY DOCK	C	CRANAGE	Boh	BOAT HOIST	Bh	BOAT HIRE
B	BOTTOM-BLACKING	An	ANTIFOULING	BB	BOAT BUILDERS	Dh	DAY HIRE
Di	DIESEL	DIY	DIY WORKSHOPS	M	MOORINGS	H	HEATING
A	ANODES	P	PAINTING	WD	WET DOCK	Pl	PLUMBING
G	GAS	R	REPAIRS	Ch	CHANDLERY	W	WELDING
Po	PUMPOUT	Br	BROKERAGE	T	TRANSPORT		

DIRECTORY

HOLIDAY HIRE



Services Offered...

- 🟪 Romantic Breaks
- 🟩 Family Holidays
- 🟦 Stag & Hen Do's
- 🟧 Christmas / New Year
- 🟩 Lock Free Cruising
- 🟦 Flexible Booking
- 🟨 Weekly Hire
- 🟥 Short Breaks
- 🟨 Try Before You Hire
- 🟦 Visit Britain
- ▩ Assessed Luxury
- 🟥 Group Bookings (6+)
- 🟥 Wheelchair Friendly
- 🟫 Day Hire
- ⬛ Skippered Hire
- 🟪 Last Minute
- 🟧 Hotel Boat
- ⬜ Pets Allowed
- 🟨 Hire Abroad
- ⬛ Private Boat Livery

NATIONAL

ABC BOAT HIRE

T: 0330 3330 590
E: bookings@abcboathire.com
W: www.abcboathire.com

Enjoy a short break in one of our superbly equipped narrowboats. Choose from over 200 boats from 15 start locations, with 2 -12 berths available.
Visit www.abcboathire.com for more details.

🟩 🟨 🟥 ▩ 🟥

NATIONAL

ANGLO WELSH

T: 0117 304 1122
E: bookings@anglowelsh.co.uk
W: www.anglowelsh.co.uk

Welcome to the world of canal boat holidays with one of the largest UK narrow boat hire companies. With 50 years' experience, over 160 high quality and exceptional value narrow boats, we look forward to introducing you to miles of beautiful canals and rivers in England and Wales.

🟪 🟩 🟦 🟧 🟩 🟨 🟥 🟦 ▩ 🟥 🟫 ⬜

LANCASTER CANAL

CRABTREE NARROWBOAT HIRE

T: 07572 664949 & 01253 701986
E: roberthouse@crabtreenarrowboathire.com
W: www.crabtreenarrowboathire.com

Crabtree Narrowboat Hire is a small and friendly family run narrowboat hire company based on the idyllic Lancaster Canal. The Lancaster Canal is a perfect place to relax and unwind with plenty of pubs along the cut. The Canal is also lock free. We operate 4 boats from our base at Barton Grange Marina near Garstang. Three of our boats accommodate up to 4 people and one accommodates up to 6 people. We are pet friendly. Each of our boats were awarded a 2015 VisitEngland Rose Award in Recognition of Service Excellence. We provide full instruction on the operation and handling of the boats at the start of your holiday enabling the expert or complete novice to enjoy their boating experience.

🟪 🟩 🟩 🟦 🟨 🟥 ▩ 🟪

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL

CANAL CRUISING

T: 01785 813982
E: mail@canalcruising.co.uk
W: www.canalcruising.co.uk

Situated in the heart of England, we are the ideal starting point for a different type of Holiday. From our base in Stone you have several choices of routes; For an energetic week you can do the Four Counties Ring visiting Shropshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire and the Midlands.
We are pet friendly and are quite happy to welcome that all important extra member of the family.

🟪 🟩 🟦 🟨 🟥 ⬜

OXFORD CANAL

COLLEGE CRUISERS

T: 01865 554343
E: info@collegecruisers.com
W: www.collegecruisers.com

We are based on the Oxford canal in the centre of the romantic and vibrant city of Oxford which makes us very easy to get to. A canal holiday is the perfect way to relax and enjoy the company of friends or family. Party boats available.

🟪 🟩 🟧 🟦 🟨 🟥 🟥 🟫 🟪 ⬜

MACCLESFIELD CANAL

FLOATING HIRE

T: 07901 588364
E: info@floating-holidays.co.uk
W: www.floating-holidays.co.uk

Floating Holidays are a family business Located in Higher Poynton along the Macclesfield Canal. Spend your days exploring the canals of Cheshire, Derbyshire or Greater Manchester and the beautiful sights they have to offer. From our home mooring in Higher Poynton you can find a number of family and pooch friendly pubs along the canal in either direction.

🟪 🟩 🟦 🟧 🟩 🟦 🟨 🟥 🟨 🟥 🟪

SHROPS UNION & OXFORD

NAPTON NARROWBOATS

T: 01926 813644
E: enquiries@napton-marina.co.uk
W: www.napton-marina.co.uk

Our family-run fleet now gives you the best choice in style of Narrowboat to suit your requirements and holiday budget. Napton Narrowboats offers a wide choice in style of boats from their Explorer fleet to the superb Edwardian Elitefleet. Famous for their innovative design and quality, Napton Narrowboats is one of the most modern fleets on the canals. KING Size double beds on some boats and FREE Mobile Wifi on all boats - two unique Napton Narrowboats features.

🟪 🟩 🟦 🟨 🟥 ▩ 🟥 🟪

LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL

PENNINE CRUISERS

T: 01756 795478
E: info@penninecruisers.com
W: www.penninecruisers.com

Pennine Cruisers, a family run company is based in Skipton,North Yorkshire; "Gateway to the Yorkshire Dales" and situated on the beautiful Leeds and Liverpool canal. We provide everything that is needed, whether you are an absolute beginner or an experienced boater, starting with a 30 minute accompanied boat trip to the centre of Skipton whilst witnessing the extravagant views of nature along the way. We also have six Day Boats for which no previous experience is required.

🟪 🟩 🟨 🟥 🟫

SURVEYOR & EXAMINER DIRECTORY

North

SURVEYORS & EXAMINERS

MIKE BOULTON
MIIMS DIPMARSUR(YS) MABSE RMS
Blue Star Surveys BSS Examiner
& Qualified Marine Surveyor
01405 769129 • 07930 384143
www.bluestarsurveys.co.uk
info@bluestarsurveys.co.uk

JOHN CROMPTON
Marine Surveyor - Surveys of Steel and GRP boats up to 24 metres long in the North West of England
07738 356299
www.smallboatsurveys.com
john@smallboatsurveys.com

Midlands

SURVEYORS & EXAMINERS

MICHAEL CLARKE
Dip.S.C.Sur MIMarEST MABSE
Experienced narrowboat surveyor & BSS Examiner. Friendly & professional service. Fully qualified & insured. Based in Northampton, Midlands & South covered.
07944 856351 • 01604 858868
www.northernstarmarine.co.uk
info@northernstarmarine.co.uk

PETER BROOKES
CEng, ABSSE, Affil.IIMS
Technical Support Ltd. Marine Surveyor & BSS Examiner. Gas Safe Registered. Covering MdInds, Worcs, Warwcks, Staffs, Shrops, Gloucs.
07831 407943
www.technicalsupport.ltd.uk
peter@technicalsupport.ltd.uk

MICHAEL GODDING
YDSA - GAS REG - BSS
Yacht & Small Craft Surveyor
Pre-purchase & insurance surveys
Steel - Timber - GRP
Tel: 01386 247454
Mob: 07831 577182
mikegodding@talktalk.net

Wales

SURVEYORS

BEN SUTCLIFFE MARINE
Full Member of SCMS & YDSA, member of BMF/CBA. Fully insured with over 40 years experience. Fully qualified boat builder Pre-Purchase and insurance. Surveys - ultrasonic testing. Covers South Wales, Avon & Kennet and South England.
07796 457307
www.bensutcliffemarine.co.uk

Midlands

EXAMINERS

MARK EDWARDS MABSSE
Cheshire Cat Narrowboats Ltd.
Mobile Marine Engineer. Boat Safety Scheme Examiner covering Cheshire, North Wales, Shropshire, Staffordshire. Gas Safe Registered.
07970 384047
engineer@cheshirecatnarrowboats.co.uk

RUPERT SMEDLEY
BSC MIET ABSSE
BSS Examiner based on the Caldon Canal, covering Staffordshire and the surrounding area, including the Mace, Peak Forest, T&M, Shropshire Union, Llangollen, Staffs & Worcs.
01538 385388 • 07973 538690
rupert@hazelhurstcoattage.co.uk

ROB DICKINSON
BSS Examiner and Gas Engineer
ABSSE 591 - GAS SAFE REG 85654
Leisure, Liveaboard, Commercial Craft, Gas Installation, Service & Repairs, Covers Wales, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Shropshire & the Midlands.
01270 812086 • 07831 449236
menderman@live.com

STEVE WILLIAMS
BSS Examiner, Gas Safe Registered Engineer, Thetford Appliance, Service Engineer, offering a country-wide service.
07814 530679
www.iwabss-limited.co.uk
steve@iwabss-limited.co.uk

South

SURVEYORS

JOHN TOUGH
Tough Services Ltd.
Colonial Avenue,
Twickenham TW2 7EE
020 8977 4494 • 07711 283145
johntough@btinternet.com

CHRIS HOLMES
Cetec Marine Ltd.
A friendly and professional fully insured service. Steel, GRP & Timber craft. Pre-purchase surveys. Insurance surveys. Valuations. Ultrasonic testing.
07860 254369 • 01784 456872
www.cetecmarine.co.uk
surveyors@cetec.co.uk

BEN SUTCLIFFE MARINE
Full Member of SCMS & YDSA, member of BMF/CBA. Fully insured with over 40 years experience. Fully qualified boat builder. Pre-Purchase and insurance. Surveys - ultrasonic testing. Covers South Wales, Avon & Kennet and South England.
07796 457307
www.bensutcliffemarine.co.uk

South

SURVEYORS & EXAMINERS

ELLIOTT BERRY
Marsurv Marine Surveys, Nationwide Service
Tel: +44 844 567 7709
Mobile: +44 7500 881 731
info@marsurv.com
www.marsurv.com

STEPHEN MALPUS MABSE
Oxford Cruisers Ltd, The Boat Centre, Eynsham, Witney, Oxon OX29 4DA
01865 881698 • 07710 328918
oxfordcruisers@aol.com
Fax: 01865 880056

East

SURVEYORS & EXAMINERS

RICHARD THOMPSON
What Floats Your Boat Marine Surveys
Pre-purchase, Insurance
In-Water, Hull Surveys
Covers Midlands and South East
07488 485 448
www.wfybMarineSurveys.co.uk
richard@wfybMarineSurveys.co.uk

MISSED AN ISSUE?
COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION

ORDER TODAY!

Canal Boat
GREY HERON
KINGSGROUND'S 125TH BOAT
RICHARD PARRY INTERVIEW
THE THAMES RING - PART 3 WINDSOR TO BANBURY

JUNE 2025

COVER STORY Grey Heron
INSIDE The Thames Ring – Part 3, Richard Parry interview

Canal Boat
THE THAMES RING
STOKE BRUERNE TO WINDSOR
STARGAZER A 70FT WIDEBEAM

MAY 2025

COVER STORY The Thames Ring
INSIDE Crossing the Great Ouse, Birmingham Canal Navigations Cleanup

Canal Boat
MAC IS BACK IN TOWN
BY STONE BESPOKE NARROW BOATS
CRUISE GUIDE THE THAMES RING

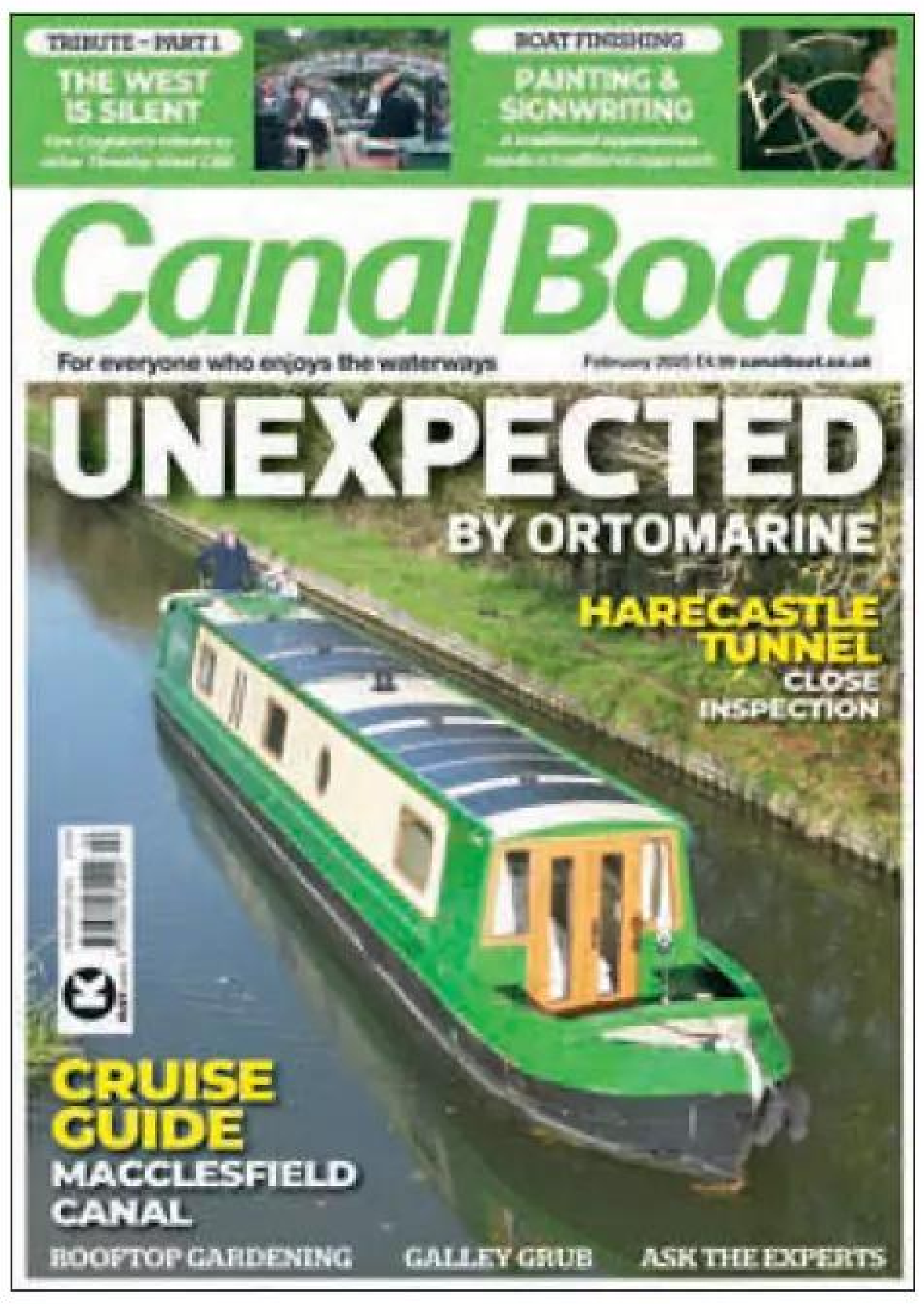
APRIL 2025

COVER STORY MAC by Stone Bespoke Narrow Boats
INSIDE The Thames Ring, winter walk along the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal

Canal Boat
HOLIDAY SPECIAL
CRT CHIEF RICHARD PARRY TO STAND DOWN
CRUISE GUIDE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON CANAL

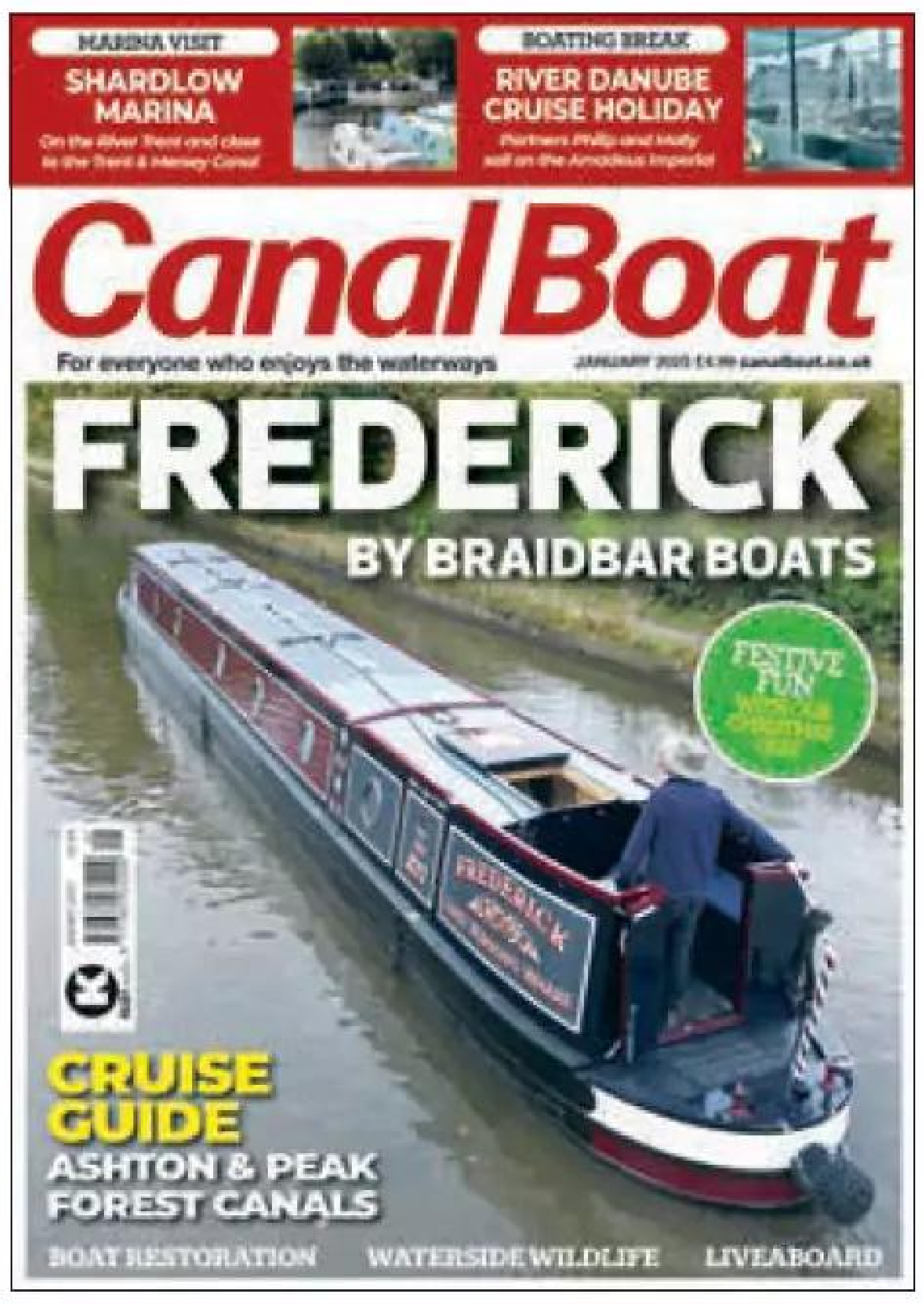
MARCH 2025

COVER STORY Holiday special
INSIDE CRT Chief Richard Parry to stand down, Stratford-upon-Avon Canal


Canal Boat
UNEXPECTED BY ORTOMARINE
HARECASTLE TUNNEL CLOSE INSPECTION
CRUISE GUIDE MACCLESFIELD CANAL

FEBRUARY 2025

COVER STORY Unexpected by Ortomarine
INSIDE Harecastle tunnel inspection, the Macclesfield Canal, painting and signwriting


Canal Boat
FREDERICK BY BRAIDBAR BOATS
CRUISE GUIDE ASHTON & PEAK FOREST CANALS

JANUARY 2025

COVER STORY Frederick by Braidbar boats
INSIDE Ashton & Peak Forest Canals, Shardlow Marina, River Danube cruise

Canal Boat
DAZZLING JEWEL
CRUISE GUIDE THE CHESTERFIELD CANAL EXPLORED

DECEMBER 2024

COVER STORY Dazzling Jewel by Cain Narrowboats
INSIDE The Chesterfield Canal, the Norwood Tunnel, prepare for winter

Canal Boat
TUSITALA
CRUISE GUIDE THE SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL PART 2: THE NORTHERN LENGTH

NOVEMBER 2024

COVER STORY Tusitala by Finesse Boats
INSIDE The Shropshire Union Canal, Grand Union transfer plan

Canal Boat
SUNFLOWER
AN ALL-ELECTRIC SEMI-CRUISER HIRE BOAT
CRUISE GUIDE THE SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL PART 1: THE SOUTHERN LENGTH

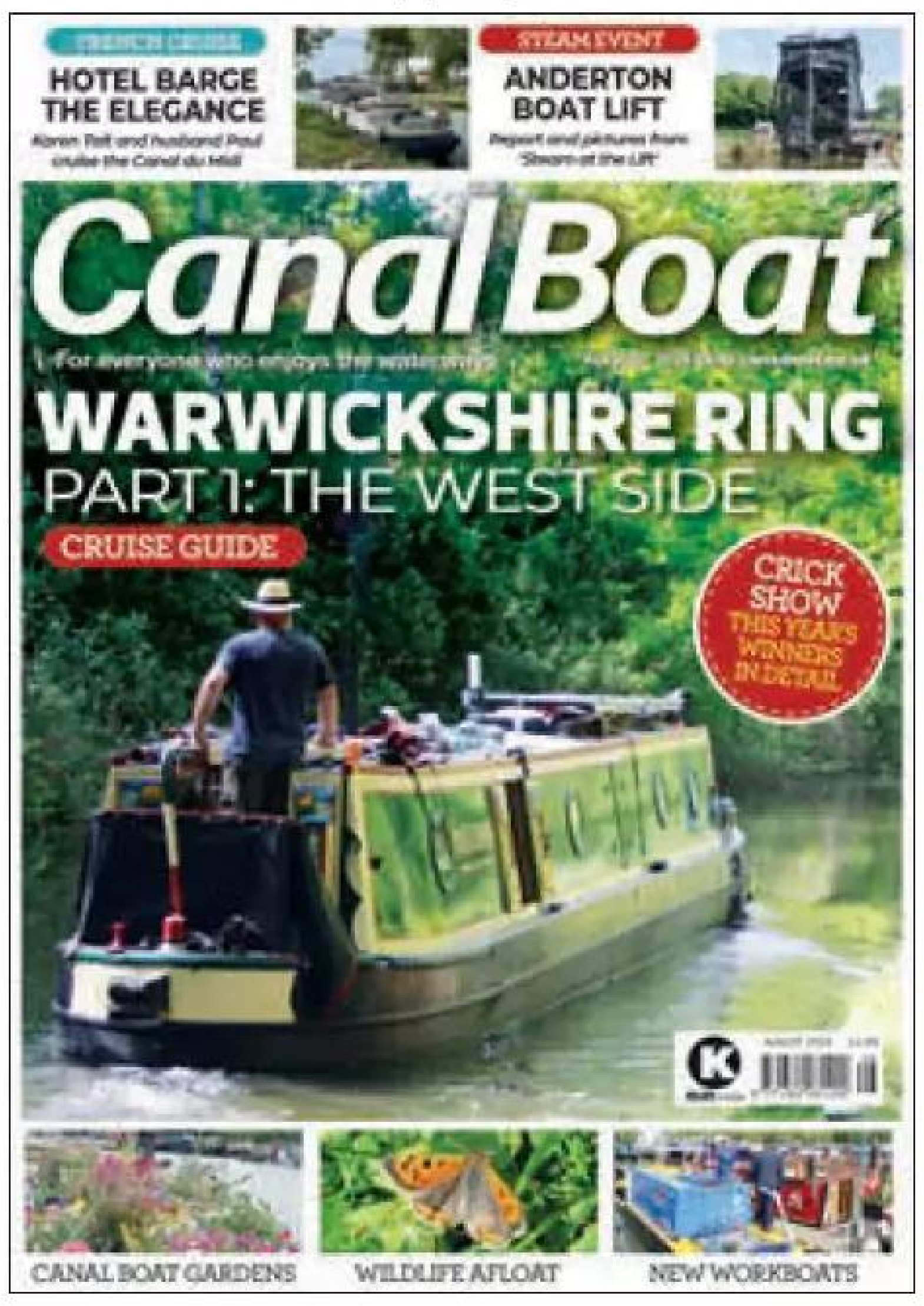
OCTOBER 2024

COVER STORY Shropshire Union Canal
INSIDE: Toddbrook Reservoir repairs, Lock-free boat holiday, Tom Rolt – Part 2

Canal Boat
WARWICKSHIRE RING PART 2: THE EAST SIDE
PLUS THE MAN WHO BUILT HIS OWN PRIVATE CANAL NETWORK

SEPTEMBER 2024

COVER STORY Warwickshire Ring – Pt 2
INSIDE More boats from Crick, Fenny Marina, Tom Rolt – Part 1


Canal Boat
WARWICKSHIRE RING PART 1: THE WEST SIDE

AUGUST 2024

COVER STORY Warwickshire Ring
INSIDE Crick – this year's winners, Cruise on the Canal du Midi

Canal Boat
KINGSGROUND WORK THEIR MAGIC ON POTTER
CRUISE GUIDE THE MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL

JULY 2024

COVER STORY Potter by Kingsground
INSIDE First report from Crick, the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

Visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/canissue
Call the hotline 01959 543 747*

*Hotline open Mon – Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls charged at your standard network rate

or scan me!

EPIFANES®
Yacht Coatings

FEATURED:

EPIFANES CLEAR VARNISH

- no. 1 clear varnish worldwide
- extra UV filter
- easy application
- excellent flow

LAK- EN VERFFABRIEK W. HEEREN & ZOON B.V. AALSMEER/HOLLAND
BARNIZ • VERNIS
EPIFANES®
HIGH GLOSS
CLEAR VARNISH
1000 ml
EXTRA UV-FILTER
EPIFANES
Multi Marine Primer
EPIFANES
Poly-urethane
Poly-urethane
Mono-urethane

www.epifanes.nl/uk > video's
For technical advice and tips & tricks,
please watch our online instruction video's

info@epifanes.nl | helpdesk: +31 297 360 366

SECOND HAND BOATS

Do you have a boat to sell?
email your details telling us
what makes your boat special.
editor@canalboat.co.uk

The best things come in small packages

1990 // 23FT // 2 BERTH // **LILIBET** **£16,000**

Lilibet is a small but perfectly formed narrowboat, perfect for exploring the canal network! Entering from the stern there is a galley and dining area. This area is really cleverly designed and comes with a sink, gas cooker with 2-burner hob and a mint fridge tucked away under one of the seats. A WC cupboard follows. Inside there is a mirror and cassette toilet. A storage cupboard is immediately opposite. The last area is the saloon. Bench style seating converts into a double berth. There is also a removable table, TV and a Boatman solid fuel stove. A single step leads out onto the bow deck. Viewing of this marvellous little boat comes highly recommended!

CONTACT: abcboatsales.com // 0330 3330 593

Built for comfort

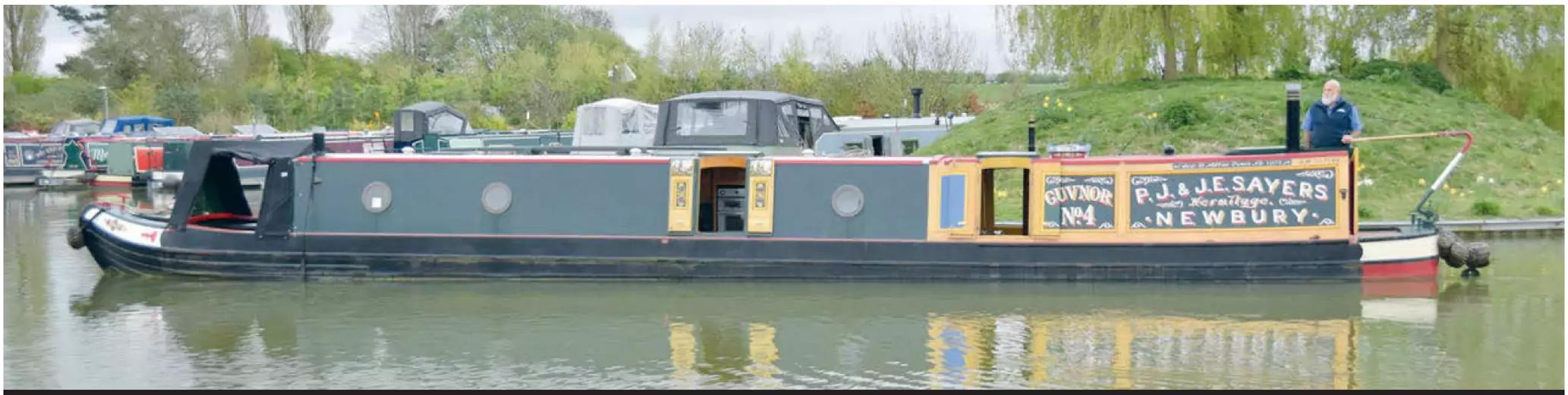
2002 // 57FT // 2+4 BERTH // **EVERGREEN 2** **£49,995**

CONTACT: www.abnb.co.uk // 01788 822115

Designed for comfortable living, Evergreen 2 is a six berth narrowboat, perfect for a liveaboard with space for family and friends. Built on a Tim Tyler shell and fitted out by her first owner, she is both practical and spacious. Entering from the stern you will notice the large sliding hatch, allowing crew members to accompany the steerer while maintaining the traditional profile of the boat. The master bedroom at the aft offers a peaceful retreat with wardrobe and generous storage. The off-corridor bathroom is well equipped with a shower over the bath, washbasin and a composting WC. Moving forward, the galley provides plenty of cupboard space, oven and fridge. The raised Pullman dinette serves as a dining area and converts into additional sleeping space. At the fore, the saloon features two large bench seats and a solid fuel stove, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. While there is no central heating, the plumbing and radiator are in place and two electric panel heaters provide warmth when moored. Blacked in November 2024,

You can be the governor of Guv'nor

2003 // 55FT // 0+2 BERTH // **GUV'NOR** **£94,000**

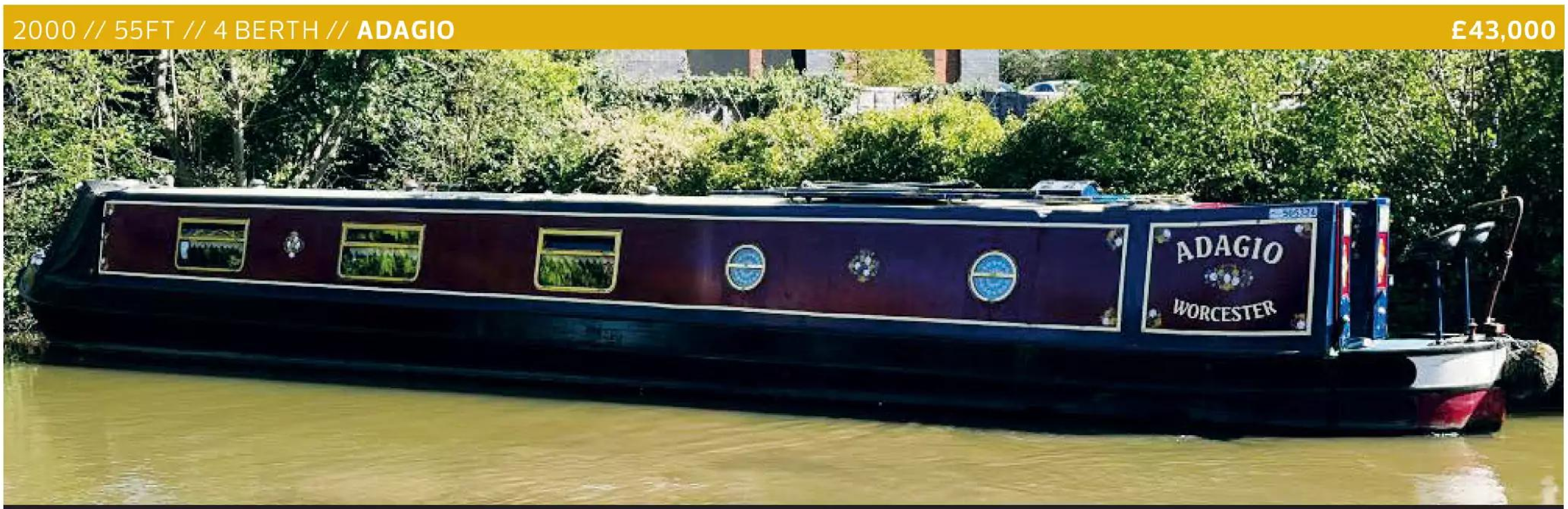


CONTACT: www.abnb.co.uk // 01788 822115

Guv'nor is a traditionlist's dream, built to last with pride and precision. Her sleek Josher lines were crafted by Graham Edgson (Norton Canes Boat Builders) and include a 12mm baseplate. Traditional decoration is by Phil Speight and the back cabin is particularly exquisite. The fit-out throughout is hand-crafted in American oak. The saloon features two leather chairs with footstools, and the galley is fitted with durable Corian worktops and sink, gas cooking, fridge/freezer and a washing machine. A walk-through shower room includes a quadrant shower, pump out WC and washbasin. Heating is by Eberspacher diesel boiler, a solid fuel stove in the saloon, and a range in the back cabin. Electricity comes from a Victron 3kW inverter/charger and a 4kW engine driven generator. Power is from a Gardner 2L2 diesel engine, restored and maintained by Paul and Tony Redshaw and originally used to power a search light during WWII. Guv'nor is a fine example of quality boatbuilding, blending character, comfort and traditional craftsmanship.

Enjoy a slower pace of life

2000 // 55FT // 4 BERTH // **ADAGIO** **£43,000**



CONTACT: abcboatsales.com // 0330 3330 593

Adagio is an attractive, well presented narrowboat ideal as both a holiday boat and a live aboard. Upon entering from the stern, the first cabin is the bedroom which has a double bed and a wardrobe. The bathroom is fitted with a toilet, shower cubicle and a basin. Quite cleverly, there is a washing machine plumbed in underneath the basin, maximising the use of the space in this area. A 'U' shaped galley follows. This is equipped with a built-in oven at eye level with a fridge underneath, a separate integrated hob, microwave and a sink & drainer. There is also plenty of worktop space and storage cupboards. The last area is an open plan dinette and saloon. The dinette can be converted into another double berth and the area is heated by a stove. The boat also has radiators throughout. Adagio has a Boat Safety Certificate, valid until July 2027. You won't want to miss out on this superb boat.

Canal Boat BUYING TIPS

Before you buy consider...

- Do you want a project or something in pristine condition?
- What type of boat is best for you?
- Do you plan to live aboard full-time?
- How much space do you actually need?
- Where will you be mooring your narrowboat?
- Do you need to arrange an independent survey?

GJW Direct
Marine Insurance Since 1826

Explore UK Narrowboat Insurance

Get a quote

Agreed value
Contents cover
RCR cover

*Features are subject to exclusions and limitations. For more information about the features of our GJW Direct insurance, please refer to the relevant policy document.

PAY Monthly

- Spread the cost over 12, 24, 36, 48 or 60 months
- Any mix of products over £300
- 19.9% APR

5 MINUTE APPLICATION

Machine Mart

Britain's Tools & Machinery specialist!
www.machinemart.co.uk

FRIENDLY STORES NATIONWIDE

FREE 500 PAGE CATALOGUE
GET YOUR FREE COPY!
- IN-STORE
- ONLINE
- PHONE

0844 880 1265

MODULAR GARAGE STORAGE SYSTEMS

COMBGSM01
070112891

10 PACKAGES IN THE RANGE

PRICE CUT NOW FROM £1059.00 exc.VAT
£1270.80 inc.VAT
WAS £1318.80 inc.VAT

- CREATE THE PERFECT FITTED GARAGE/WORKSHOP
- HEAVY DUTY, PROFESSIONAL PACKAGES
- ALL UNITS ALSO AVAILABLE SINGLY FOR CUSTOM BUILD

SAVE UP TO £479 compared to individual prices

CUSTOMER PICTURES

CORNER UNITS IN STOCK

A CHOICE OF STAINLESS STEEL OR WOODEN WORKTOPS

HEAVY DUTY & PROFESSIONAL

PRICE CUT
1 £149.98 exc.VAT
£179.98 inc.VAT
WAS £185.99 inc.VAT

BALL BEARING ROLLER DRAWERS Clarke HD PLUS

THE ULTIMATE IN TOOL STORAGE!
- Extra heavy gauge double wall steel construction

FULL DETAILS - SEE IN STORE OR VISIT WEBSITE

HUGE CHOICE OF HAND TOOLS

RUBBER GRIP SIDE HANDLES

BLUE LINE INDUSTRIAL
BLACK GOLD LINE
Clarke CONTRACTOR

2 £279.00 exc.VAT
£334.80 inc.VAT

NB Overall length includes handles

‡ WAS £179.98 inc.VAT ◆ WAS £185.99 inc.VAT

	Model	Desc.	LxWxH (mm)	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
	CBB203C	3 Dr Step Up	716x316x256	070118012	£86.99	£104.39
	CBB205C‡	5 Dr Chest	710x315x420	070118016	£145.99	£175.19
1	CBB209C◆	9 Dr Chest	710x315x420	070118032	£149.98	£179.98
	CBB210C	10 Dr Chest	710x315x475	070118037	£169.98	£203.98
	CBB215C	5 Dr Cabinet	758x468x815	070118052	£249.00	£298.80
2	CBB217C	7 Dr Cabinet	758x468x975	070118057	£279.00	£334.80

PRICE CUT £54.99 exc.VAT
£65.99 inc.VAT
WAS £68.39 inc.VAT

32 PIECE SET

PRO378 PROFESSIONAL 1/2" DRIVE SOCKET SET

TOOL SETS

1 £629.00 exc.VAT
£754.80 inc.VAT

PRO396
040218396

222 PIECE TOOL SET WITH 7 DRAWER TOOL CABINET

300 PIECE AF/ METRIC HOME GARAGE REPAIR KIT

£197.00 exc.VAT 2
£236.40 inc.VAT

CHT859
040213859

PROFESSIONAL 91 PIECE TOOL KIT WITH CANTILEVER TOOLBOX

PRO394
040218394

3 £109.98 exc.VAT
£131.98 inc.VAT

MECHANICS/PROFESSIONAL TOOL CHESTS/CABINETS

NEW

3 £139.98 exc.VAT
£167.98 inc.VAT

5

6

DIY & PROFESSIONAL

4 £249.00 exc.VAT
£298.80 inc.VAT

- Superb quality & value for DIY & professional workshops

PRICE CUT
2 £169.98 exc.VAT
£203.98 inc.VAT
WAS £210.00 inc.VAT

PRICE CUT
1 £79.98 exc.VAT
£95.98 inc.VAT
WAS £101.99 inc.VAT

	Model	Desc.	LxWxH (mm)	Order Code	exc.VAT	WAS inc.VAT	inc.VAT
	MECHANICS RANGE						
1	CTC600C	6 Dr Chest	620x257x335	070116037	£79.98	£101.99	£95.98
6	CTC900C	9 Dr Chest	620x257x380	070110903	£84.99	£107.98	£101.99
	CTC500C	5 Dr Cabinet	680x330x765	070116002	£144.99	£179.98	£173.99
	CTC800C	8 Dr Chest/Cab Set	616x295x1027	070113032	£139.98	£173.99	£167.98
2	CTC700C	7 Dr Cabinet	680x330x875	070116009	£169.98	£210.00	£203.98
	CTC1300C	13 Dr Combi	680x335x1304	070113042	£189.98	-	£227.98
	PROFESSIONAL RANGE						
5	CTC103C	3 Dr Step Up Chest	691x310x256	070113016	£74.99	-	£89.99
3	CTC109	9 Dr Chest	685x305x419	070113211	£139.98	-	£167.98
4	CTC107C	7 Dr Cabinet	739x461x953	070113126	£249.00	-	£298.80

NB Overall length includes handles

Clarke BALL BEARING ROLLER DRAWERS

FULL EXTENSION ROLLER RUNNERS FOR SMOOTH OPENING ACTION

BOLTLESS SHELVING/ BENCHES

FROM £39.98 exc.VAT
£47.98 inc.VAT

LOADING OPTIONS
150 KG PER SHELF
350 KG PER SHELF
EVENLY DISTRIBUTED

CHOICE OF 5 COLOURS
RED, BLUE, SILVER, GREY & GALVANISED STEEL

Clarke

- Simple fast assembly in minutes using only a hammer

Model	Weight	Dims WxDxH(mm)	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
CSM5150BP	150kg	800x300x1500	070710816	£39.98	£47.98
CSM5350BP	350kg	900x400x1800	070710808	£57.99	£69.59

5 DRAWER WORKBENCH

Clarke

EXTRA LONG 1700MM WORK TOP

CWB1700P
040315510

£329.00 exc.VAT
£394.80 inc.VAT

BEST SELLER

CHESTS/CABINETS

Clarke PREMIUM
BALL BEARING ROLLER DRAWERS

1 £159.98 exc.VAT
£191.98 inc.VAT

- Combines premium quality with fiercely competitive pricing & super smooth ball bearing roller drawers

30KG MAX DRAWER LOAD

SEE WEBSITE FOR PACKAGE DEALS WITH TOOLS

EXTRA LARGE BOTTOM DRAWERS

2 £259.00 exc.VAT
£310.80 inc.VAT

	Model	Desc.	LxWxH (mm)	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
1	CLB900C	9 Dr Chest	685x305 x474	070114821	£159.98	£191.98
2	CLB1007C	7 Dr Cabinet	740x465 x955	070118042	£259.00	£310.80

WORKBENCHES WITH PEGBOARD

Easy to assemble, providing valuable working space and plenty of additional storage capacity.
- Dimensions (LxWxH) - 1150x560x1440m
- Pegboard back wall with 30 hooks supplied

PRICE CUT NOW FROM £72.99 exc.VAT
£87.59 inc.VAT
WAS £89.99 inc.VAT

CWB-R1B
040317706

BALL BEARING ROLLER DRAWERS

AVAILABLE IN RED OR GALVANISED FINISH

ENGINEERS HEAVY DUTY STEEL WORKBENCHES

Clarke

PRICE CUT NOW FROM £259.98 exc.VAT
£311.98 inc.VAT
WAS £347.98 inc.VAT

INCLUDES SINGLE LOCKABLE DRAWER

Shown fitted with optional 3 drawer unit Only £155.98 Inc VAT

- Durable powder coated finish
- Sturdy lower shelf

‡ WAS £347.98 inc.VAT
◆ WAS £382.80 inc.VAT

Model	Dims. LxWxH (mm)	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
CWB1500D‡	1500x650x985	040317718	£259.98	£311.98
CWB2001P	2000x650x978	040317809	£279.98	£335.98
CWB2000D◆	2000x650x978	040317807	£309.00	£370.80

CLASSIFIEDS

To advertise your business in our Classifieds section, please contact Catherine Crockart on 01732 445678 or catherine@talk-media.uk

BOAT COVERS

H.T. Fabrications Ltd.

High quality shells and sailaways. Cruiser, Trad, Semitrad and Barges. Narrow and widebeam.

Phone: 0116 2761814
Web: www.htfabs.co.uk
Email: enquiries@htfabs.co.uk

BOAT COVERS & CANOPIES

All types of marine craft

Covering the North of England

amtrim
auto & marine trim specialist

01772 285100
Email info@amtrim.co.uk
www.amtrim.co.uk

BOAT NAMES

Durable Self Adhesive Vinyl

BOAT NAMES

Easy DIY application, Order online or talk to our friendly staff
SPECIAL EFFECT HIGHLIGHT SHADOWS AVAILABLE

MADELEINE
STOURTON

01384 443744 sales@sacboatnames.co.uk
www.sacboatnames.co.uk

SURVEYING

Narrowboat Surveyor
& Boat Safety Examiner

Michael Clarke Dip.S.C.Sur MIMarEST

- A Friendly & Professional Service
- Fully Qualified & Insured
- Ultrasonic Pre-purchase & Hull Condition Surveys
- No extra travelling Charges - All areas covered
- Northampton based

01604 858 868 - 07944 856 351
info@northernstarmarine.co.uk - www.northernstarmarine.co.uk

YACHT & SMALL CRAFT SURVEYOR

PRE-PURCHASE & INSURANCE SURVEYS STEEL-TIMBER-GRP

MICHAEL GODDING
YDSA - GAS REG

Evesham, Worcestershire
T: 01386 247454 M: 07831 577182
mikegodding@talktalk.net

LIGHTING

BOATLAMPS

Boatlamps supply replacement LED bulbs designed and selected specifically for marine craft light fixtures in the powerboat and sail leisure market.

www.boatlamps.co.uk
sales@boatlamps.co.uk • Telephone: 01753 303418

BOAT HIRE

NORTHERN DELIGHTS

SHIRE CRUISERS
SOWERBY BRIDGE

Start from the heart of the northern waterways, and discover a new Yorkshire.

Friendly helpful service.

Comprehensive training.

Tel: (01422) 832712 www.shirecruisers.co.uk
VisitEngland Assessed

BOAT STOVES

HARWORTH HEATING
bubble

Visit our website for the full range of solid fuel and oil stoves

tel: 01302 742520
email: contact@harworthheating.co.uk
www.harworthheating.co.uk

MAIL FORWARDING

boatmail.co.uk

The boater's **mail forwarding** company.

info@boatmail.co.uk 07984 215 873

Advertising doesn't cost, it pays!

For more information Call 01732 445678
or email catherine@talk-media.uk

CLASSIFIEDS

EQUIPMENT

TANK SPECIALISTS

Polypropylene water or sewage holding tanks, battery boxes, etc. Made to your requirements. Telephone, fax or email for a quotation anytime.

GOODWIN PLASTICS LTD

Tel: (01270) 582 516
Fax: (01270) 251 221 | Mobile: 07740 404 938
Email: sales@goodwinplastics.co.uk | www.goodwinplastics.co.uk
Unit 1, 277 Crewe Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 5RU

DECKING

TEKDEK FLEXIBLE PANELS

A superb alternative to wooden decking that can be applied to almost any surface including GRP, steel and timber.

Tel: 01420 587802 | info@tek-dek.com
www.tek-dek.com

Tek-Dek Flexible Panels

INSURANCE

WESTFIELD
SUB AQUA & MARINE INSURANCE SERVICES LTD

Specialist Narrow Boat
Insurance

- BOAT & CONTENTS
- ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE
- VANDALISM
- MALICIOUS DAMAGE
- FIRE & THEFT
- FLOOD DAMAGE
- THIRD PARTY LIABILITY
- LOW EXCESSES

ESTABLISHED SINCE 1948

For an instant quote phone 'your insurance buddy' on 01483 237827 or visit www.narrowboatinsurance.uk.com

Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

Quality Low Cost Marine Insurance Quotation in 5 Clicks and 30 Seconds

insurance-4-boats.co.uk

Our name says it all!
For quick, instant quotations and cover for all type of marine craft contact us on:

www.insurance-4-boats.co.uk
Telephone: 01656 784866
Fax: 01656 784872
quotes@insurance-4-boats.co.uk

Insurance-4-boats.co.uk is a trading style of Porthcawl Insurance Consultants (UK) Ltd. PIC is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. All telephone calls are recorded.

Don't miss the next issue
177
On sale: 3rd July!

MARINAS

Crick Wharf Marina

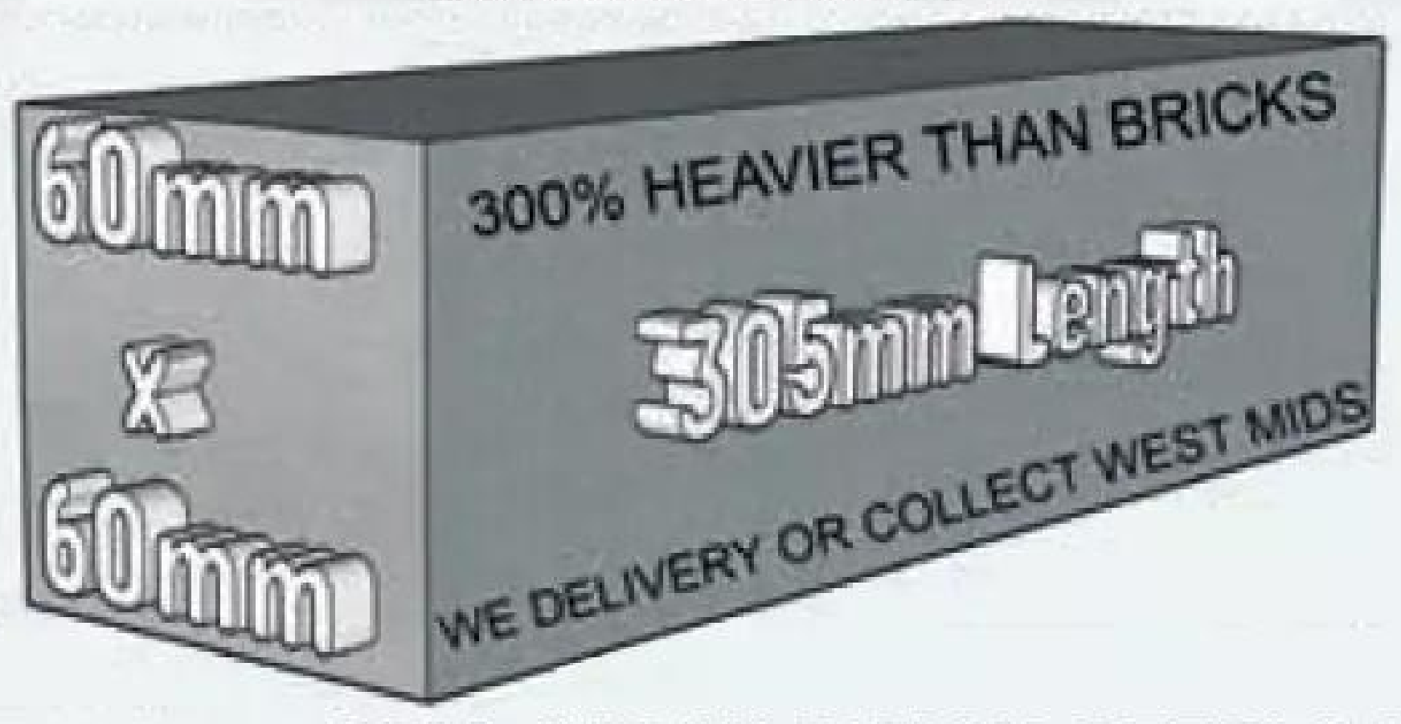
A small, friendly marina in a tranquil, private offline basin with 21 miles of lock free cruising

230V electric supply, water points and wi-fi on site, with local amenities within walking distance

07401 297 253
mooring@crickwharf.co.uk
www.crickwharf.co.uk
NN6 7XT

BALLAST

STEEL BALLAST FOR BOATS
8.6KGS EACH



CALL MANNBUCK STEELS LTD
BILL OR NIGEL: 07770446675 / 01277364344
mannbuckandco@aol.com

BOAT HANDLING

WATERCRAFT Training

RYA TRAINING CENTRE

Inland waterway helmsman & crew courses. Intro to waterways, ICC & CEVNI training and assessments, VHF SRC, diesel maintenance and first aid.

07860 354890 | watercraft.org.uk | training@watercraft.org.uk
Based at Thrupp on the South Oxford Canal

INSURANCE

BASIC BOAT
LIABILITY COMPANY
UK'S NUMBER 1 MARKET LEADER
IN BOAT LIABILITY INSURANCE

- Third Party Liability
- No Excess
- £5M Level of Indemnity
- Upto £50k for Wreck Removal

03333 219 430 | www.basic-boat.com
PA727BB01

THIS COMPANY IS PART OF HOWE MAXTED GI LTD WHO ARE AUTHORISED AND REGULATED BY THE FINANCIAL CONDUCT AUTHORITY

craftinsure.com
Narrowboat insurance made easy

Quotes in 20 seconds
Cover in 2 minutes
Low on-line premiums

Get the App - craftinsure.com/app

> craftinsure.com ☎ 03452 607888
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

GET YOUR FIX BETWEEN ISSUES!

SIGN UP TO OUR FREE NEWSLETTER

You'll receive monthly newsletters filled with the most up-to-date news on the UK park and leisure home industry, as well as expert tips, advice and inspiration, competitions, plus much more!

BONUS ParkHome & HOLIDAY LIVING CONTENT

SIGN UP TODAY AT
PARKHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK

BUSINESS WEBSITES DIRECTORY

BOAT BUILDERS

- AINTREE BOATS
  www.aintreeboats.co.uk
- ALEXANDER BOATBUILDERS
  www.alexanderboatbuilders.co.uk
- BLUEWATER BOATS
  www.bluewaterboats.co.uk
- BOATING LEISURE SERVICES
  www.boatingleisureservices.com
- BRAIDBAR BOATS
  www.braidbarboats.co.uk
- COLECRAFT
  www.colecraftboats.co.uk
- COLLINGWOOD BOATBUILDERS
  www.collingwoodboatbuilders.co.uk
- FINESSE BOATS
  www.finesseboats.co.uk
- TYLER WILSON
  www.tylerwilsonboats.co.uk
- WHARF HOUSE NARROWBOATS
  www.wharfhouse.co.uk
- XR&D BOAT BUILDERS
  www.xrandd.co.uk

BOAT COVERS

- AMTRIM
  www.atrim.co.uk
- KNIVER CANOPIES
  www.knivercanopies.co.uk

BOAT ENGINES

- BETA MARINE
  www.betamarine.co.uk
- VETUS DEN OUDEN
  www.vetus.com

BOAT HEATING

- EBERSPAECHER
  www.eberspaecher.co.uk
- NORTHERN FABRICATION SERVICES
  www.boatmanstove.com

BOAT HIRE & HOLIDAY

- BEAR BOATING
  www.bearboating.co.uk
- CALCUTT BOATS
  www.calcuttboats.com
- COLLEGE CRUISERS
  www.colleguecruisers.com
- CRABTREE NARROWBOAT HIRE
  www.crabtreenarrowboathire.com
- NAPTON NARROWBOATS
  www.napton-marina.co.uk
- SHIRE CRUISERS
  www.shirecruisers.co.uk

BOAT NAMES

- FUNKY MONKEY
  www.funkymonkeyboatnames.co.uk
- SAC GRAPHICS
  www.sacboatnames.com

BOAT SALES

- ABC LEISURE
  www.abcboatsales.com
- ABNB LTD
  www.abnb.co.uk
- BRAUNSTON MARINA
  www.braunstonmarina.co.uk
- NEW & USED BOAT CO
  www.newandusedboat.co.uk
- VIRGINIA CURRER MARINE
  www.vcmarine.co.uk

BOAT SURVEYORS

- BLUE STAR SURVEYS
  www.bluestarsurveys.co.uk
- NORTHERN STAR MARINE
  www.northernstarmarine.co.uk
- CETEC MARINE
  www.cetecmarine.co.uk

BOAT YARDS

- HIGH LINE YACHTING
  www.high-line.co.uk
- NORTH KILWORTH WHARF
  www.northkilworthwharf.com
- OXFORD CRUISERS LTD
  www.oxfordcruisers.com

BREAKDOWN SERVICES

- RIVER CANAL RESCUE
  www.rivercanalrescue.co.uk

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

- AES
  www.autoelectricsupplies.co.uk
- GOODWIN PLASTICS
  www.goodwinplastics.co.uk
- KURANDA
  www.kuranda.co.uk
- VEHICLE WIRING PRODUCTS
  www.vehicleproducts.co.uk

INSULATION

- WEBSTERS INSULATION
  www.webstersinsulation.com

INSURANCE

- BASIC BOAT LIABILITY COMPANY
  www.basic-boat.com
- CRAFTINSURE LTD
  www.craftinsure.com
- PORTHCAWL INSURANCE
  www.porthcawl-insurance.co.uk
- WESTFIELD INSURANCE SERVICES
  www.divinginsuranceuk.com

MAGAZINES

- CANAL BOAT MAGAZINE
  www.canalboat.co.uk

MARINAS

- CAEN HILL
  www.caenhillmarina.com
- CATLE MARINAS
  www.castlemarinas.co.uk
- DEBDALE WHARF
  www.debdalewharf.co.uk
- DROITWICH SPA MARINA
  www.droitwichspamarina.co.uk
- KINGFISHER MARINA
  www.kingfishermarinas.co.uk
- MERCIA MARINA
  www.merciamarina.co.uk
- NORTHWICH QUAY
  www.northwichquay.com
- SWANLEY BRIDGE MARINA
  www.swanleybridgemarina.com
- YELVERTOFT MARINA
  www.yelvertoft-marina.com

PLUMBING

- LEESAN
  www.leesan.com

PROPERTY

- SHERIDAN PARSONS POWERED BY EXP
  www.sheridanparsons.exp.uk.com

TRAINING

- WATERCRAFT
  www.watercraft.org.uk
- WILLOW WREN TRAINING
  www.willowwrentraining.co.uk

WINDOWS

- CHANNEL GLAZE
  www.channelglaze.com

THE **LAST WORD**

rugbyboats
www.rugbyboats.co.uk
Premium Boat Brokers
& Wharf Services
01327 342211

SMOKING!

Rugby Boats had the fire burning black smoke and then white as Pope Leo XIV was elected, and then they prayed for more boat sales, which seems to be happening already!!

James Millsop // Second-Hand Boats

We recently went through the Conclave process to elect our new Pope, Leo XIV, and here at Rugby Boats we took on the responsibility of letting the local canal dwellers know how the election results were going. We used the office stove and burnt black smoke which came out of our chimney when there was no majority vote and white smoke when Leo was eventually elected. Luckily, the process only took two days and while I am not sure if anybody apart from myself even noticed, I rather enjoyed doing it! It was quite a giggle.

Talking of matters religious, those who are inclined to do so are cordially invited to join me in praying that the narrowboat market picks up soon. We currently have 14 boats here for sale which for us is a lot and, while they are selling, it is taking longer to do so than in recent months. Boats seem to be very price sensitive at the moment and getting it right is key.

I'm blaming Trump. I think he may be behind the slow down. Following his behaviour since his re-election the whole world seems to be holding their breath waiting to see what he will do next. I believe people's pensions have taken a hammering following his effect on the stock markets and people seem to be very cautious about spending money. The same seems to be the case with the housing market I hear.

Confidence will return, and things will pick up, of that I am certain and, interestingly enough, in between starting to write this column and getting to this point, we have sold a boat in addition to the one we sold yesterday. So perhaps I am talking nonsense and things are on the move. But time will tell....

At the end of March (the end of our financial year), we nearly reached the previous years' record breaking numbers. So, while it is early days for this current year, the figures show that we are growing, and we can only be doing so if we provide a good service.

So, if you are thinking of selling your boat this year, by all means give us a call to see if we can help.! CB

www.rugbyboats.co.uk.
01327 342211

NICHOLSON

The bestselling guides to Britain's canals and rivers for more than 50 years

NICHOLSON
Grand Union, Oxford & the South East
WATERWAYS GUIDE 1
Birmingham
Grand Union Canal — Main Line
OXFORD CANAL
Oxford Canal
NICHOLSON
Inland Waterways Map of Great Britain
THE NUMBER 1 BESTSELLING WATERWAYS MAP
Collins NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE 5
North West & the Pennines
Collins NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE 4
Four Counties & the Welsh Canals
Collins NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE 2
Severn, Avon & Birmingham
Collins NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE 3
Birmingham & the Heart of England
NICHOLSON
Nottingham, York & the North East
WATERWAYS GUIDE 6
NICHOLSON
River Thames & the Southern Waterways
WATERWAYS GUIDE 7
Collins NICHOLSON
WATERWAYS GUIDE
Norfolk Broads
The bestselling guides to Britain's canals and rivers

collins.co.uk/waterways

vetus
WWW.VETUS.COM

CREATORS OF
BOAT SYSTEMS

SMOOTH
SILENT
CRUISING
SOLUTIONS
THRUSTER
10000 W
36.0C
36.0C
45.8V
1440 RPM
-214.20A
< 1h 21m

E-Line Electric Propulsion Systems

- *Innovative design*
- *Silent and efficient*
- *New build, refit and repower*
- *Complete system solutions*
- *Unrivalled warranties**

vetus 5 WARRANTY
vetus 3 WARRANTY

vetus MAXWELL MAREX V-QUIPMENT

*Warranty terms and conditions can be found at www.vetus.com